THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEK AND LATIN ELEGIAC POETRY AND ITS INFLUENCE UPON JOHN MILTON'S LATIN ELEGIES, TOGETHER WITH A TRANSLATION OF THESE ELEGIES INTO ENGLISH VERSE

A THESIS

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GERALD EDWARD BRICE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts, first of all, to describe the origins and the growth of elegiac verse, first in Greece and then in Rome. It was in Greece that the elegy acquired a variety of themes, particularly in the so-called "Hellenistic" period. When transferred to Rome, there were added, or stressed, those elements which make up the Latin love-elegy.

Latin elegiac verse continued to be written throughout Europe during the Medieval Period which followed the fall of the Roman empire. This elegiac verse, however, was of minor importance. After the Renaissance brought the Middle Ages to a close Latin continued to be a sine qua non for educated people. Thus, Latin verse, inclusive of verse in elegiac meter continued to be composed.

In the seventeenth century A.D., one of the outstanding writers was John Milton. This thesis will attempt to indicate something of the extent to which Milton derived inspiration from the Latin elegists.

In addition, in the belief that the reading of a prose translation of verse, however well it may have been done, is like looking at the reverse side of a piece of tapestry, the author of this thesis has made a verse translation of the Latin elegies for which Milton was distinguished during his years at Cambridge.

Whereas former English verse translations of Latin elegy have usually been set in iambic pentameter, this work has been set in alternating lines of hexameter and pentameter in order that it may more faithfully reproduce the style and manner of presentation of the original author. However, because the dactylic meter is not well suited to

English verse, and because it would be impossible to make the English couplets correspond with their Latin counterparts without a considerablve amount of padding, the iambic meter has been selected as being most suitable.

An effort has been made to maintain a simplicity of language, and where it has been felt that the significance of some of the references might not be understood by the average twentieth century reader, a word or two of explanation has been worked into the translation. As far as possible, the style and the spirit of the original work have been preserved throughout. Thus it is to be hoped that this translation will enable a wide range of English readers to understand the meaning and appreciate the beauty of Milton's Latin elegies.

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# CHAPTER I

## THE EARLY GREEK ELEGISTS

Toward the close of the eighth century before Christ a new verse form, the elegy, began to be developed in Greece. The term did not classify the poem according to subject matter, as it does in English literature, but referred solely to the meter in which it was written. The elegiac couplet consisted of a line of dactylic hexameter followed by a line of modified dactylic pentameter. Based on long and short vowels, rather than stressed and unstressed syllables, the couplet was as follows:

— ⏑⏑ | — ⏑⏑ | — ⏑⏑ | — ⏑⏑ | — ⏑⏑ | — ⏑

— ⏑⏑ | — ⏑⏑ | — || — ⏑⏑ | — ⏑⏑ | ⏑

A series of these couplets or distichs made up an elegy.

The elegy, subjective and concerned with the present, was well suited to the period in Greek history when increasing trade, commerce, and broadening horizons of knowledge were giving the individual an increasing sense of personal importance. Where the stately hexameters of Homer, ever sweeping the listener onward, had told of heroic events in times gone by, the new literary form, with its hexameter-pentameter couplets, allowed opportunity for reflection. As Jebb states: "If the hexameter has been a trumpet-call to battle, the pentameter, by its gentler tone, can give an effect of contrast. Or if the first verse has been pathetic, the second verse can echo it in a softer key. Universally, the effect of the pentameter in the

elegiac couplet is that, instead of sweeping the mind onward, as is done by a continuous flow of hexameter verse, it invites our thought to return upon itself; it gives a meditative pause, a moment of reflection."[1]

"Elegos," an Armenian word which came to the Ionian Greeks of Asia Minor from Phrygia, was derived from "elegn-," "flute."[2] It thus appears that the early elegies were flute-songs. Furthermore, the word "elegos" seems to have been at an early period associated with laments for the dead or, in a more general sense, any sorrowful events.[2a] Thus, an elegiac couplet found on a tombstone in Perachora, believed to have been written toward the end of the eighth century B.C., would appear to bear out the hypotheses that the earliest elegies were funeral dirges:

> Great earth, beneath you hold Naxos' tall pillars,
> Megatimus and Aristophon.[3]

This couplet is, of course, an epigram, by Greek definition, a short poem in elegiac meter not exceeding eight lines. In considering elegiac verse, therefore, the epigram must always be included and is to be regarded as a short elegy. Thus, as the earliest epigrams are found to be epitaphs on tombstones, it is possible to argue that these epigrams represent the earliest temper of elegiac verse, namely for mourning.

[1] R.C. Jebb, The Growth and Influence of Classical Greek Poetry (Cambridge, 1897), p. 98.

[2] Bowra in OCD, s.v., "Elegiac Poetry, Greek," p. 310.

[2a] See Ovid, Am., III, ix, 3 for this use of the word.

[3] Cited by C. M. Bowra, Early Greek Elegists (Cambridge, 1938), p. 173. (Anthologia Lyrica Graeca, ed. E. Diehl[3] (Lipsiae, 1949), (hereafter, Diehl), fr. 17.)

If, however,the earliest elegies were mournful songs, the elegy soon broadened its subject matter. Among the first elegies on record are those written by Callinus of Ephesus in the early years of the seventh century B.C.[4] They are of a martial nature urging the citizens to rise against the Cimmerians invading Asia Minor. In a spirited passage Callinus exhorts, "And let every man cast his javelin once more as he dies. For 'tis an honorable thing and a glorious to a man to fight the foe for land and children and wedded wife . . . ."[5]

Archilochus,[6] a successor of Callinus, also wrote of war. On one occasion he was able to joke about a military mishap:

> A perfect shield bedecks some Thracian now:
> I had no choice: I left it in a wood.
> Ah, well, I saved my skin, so let it go!
> A new one's just as good.[7]

In addition, Archilochus retained the use of the elegy as a poem of mourning. When friends had been lost at sea, he wrote beautiful and deeply moving verses expressing his sorrow.

Another martial elegist of the seventh century was Tyrtaeus,[8] whose verses, such as the following, undoubtedly played a part in spurring the Spartans on to victory in the second Messenian War:

[4] Bowra in OCD, s.v., "Callinus," p. 158.

[5] Callinus, "Elegiac Poems," Elegy and Iambus I, ed. and trans. J. M. Edmonds (London, 1931), p. 45, fr. 1, 1.5ff. (Diehl, fr. 1.)

[6] Bowra in OCD, s.v., "Archilochus," p. 82.

[7] Archilochus, "Fragments," Early Greek Elegists, ed. C. M. Bowra, trans. Sir William Marris (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1938), p. 10. (Diehl, fr. 6.)

[8] Bowra in OCD, s.v., "Tyrtaeus," p. 931.

"For 'tis a fair thing for a good man to fall and die fighting in the van for his native land, whereas to leave his city and his rich fields and go a-begging is of all things the most miserable, wandering with mother dear and aged father, with little children and wedded wife."[9] One cannot ~~help~~ but notice the similarity between these sentiments and the previously quoted ones of Callinus. The contrast between bravery and cowardice is one of the chief themes in the elegies of Tyrtaeus.

Up to this point, the predominant theme of the early Greek elegists had been war. Toward the end of the period, however, a change began to take place, and martial elegies began to give way to elegies of love.

The first true predecessor of the Latin love-elegists was Mimnermus of Colophon and Smyrna, who lived during the sixth century B.C.[10] While some of this poetry deals with war, most of it is concerned with love and the need to make the most of youth. "What life, what happiness," he asks, "can there be without luxurious Aphrodite?"[11] Of the later years of life he states, "When mournful old age comes to make ugliness and beauty one, man's heart is torn with cruel vexation; the rays of the sun no more light up his face; his children hate him;

[9] Tyrtaeus, "Fragments," Elegy and Iambus I, ed. and trans. J. M. Edmonds (London, 1931), p. 69, fr. 10, l.1ff. (Diehl, fr. 10.)

[10] Bowra in OCD, s.v., "Mimnermus," p. 572.

[11] Mimnermus, "Elegies," Elegiac and Iambic Poetry, A. and M. Croiset (New York, 1904), p. 100. (Diehl, fr. 1.)

women despise him; thus have the gods made old age miserable."[12] Repeating this theme, he declares, "Like the leaves brought forth in the flowery season of spring, under the warming rays of the sun, we enjoy for one brief instant the buoyancy of youth, condemned by the gods to know neither what is good for us nor what is ill; but the shadows of fate hover round us, bringing either the feebleness of age, or death."[13]

In contrast to Mimnermus' fear of old age, the Athenian statesman, Solon, wrote, " . . . I give thee better counsel, change thy song, and sing that thou art fain the fate of Death might overtake thee at fourscore."[14] In another passage Solon states, "But as I grow old I learn many things."[15] In lines reminiscent of those of Callinus of Ephesus and Tyrtaeus, Solon uses the elegy to rouse his fellow citizens to free Salamis from the Megarians: "Let us to Salamis, to fight for a lovely isle and put away from us dishonour hard to bear."[16] The surviving fragments also abound in moral precepts and practical advice.

As Solon had written gnomic poetry, so Theognis of Megara[17]

[12] Mimnermus, ibid., p. 100. (Diehl, fr. 1.)

[13] Mimnermus, ibid., pp. 100 - 1. (Diehl, fr. 2.)

[14] Solon, "Elegies," Elegy and Iambus I, ed. and trans. J. M. Edmonds (London, 1931), p. 137, fr. 20, 1.3ff. (Diehl, fr. 20.)

[15] Solon, ibid., p. 135, fr. 18, 1.1. (Diehl, fr. 181)

[16] Solon, ibid., p. 117, fr. 3, 1.1. (Diehl, fr. 3.)

[17] Bowra in OCD, s.v., "Theognis," p. 894.

used his elegies to pass on advice to a young friend Cyrnos. Where Solon had advocated the pursuit of trade and commerce as a remedy for poverty, Theognis shows less buoyancy of spirit: "More than all else, Cyrnos, poverty crushes the honest man; more than hoary age, more than fever. Better die, if one be poor, than let one's life be eaten away by horrid misery."[18] Like Mimnermus, and like the writers of Latin love-elegy who were to follow, Theognis advocates making the most of youth: "I enjoy the sweet pleasantries of youth; for after that, beneath the earth, when I shall have given up my life, long shall I lie, quiet as a voiceless stone, far from the beautiful light of the sun . . . ."[19]

Contemporary with Theognis was Phocylides of Miletus[20] who used the elegiac meter to pass on practical advice:[21] "Thus also spake Phocylides--A little state living orderly in a high place is stronger than a block-headed Nineveh."[22] One of his best known saying is the following: "Thus also spake Phocylides--The Lerians are bad men, not one bad and another not, but all save Procles, and Procles is a Lerian."[23] In these two epigrams the elegiac distich

[18] Theognis, "Fragments," Elegiac and Iambic Poetry, A. and M. Croiset (New York, 1904), p. 107. (Diehl, frs. 181, 182)

[19] Theognis, Ibid., p. 108. (Diehl, fr. 567 - 9)

[20] Bowra in OCD, s.v., "Phocylides," p. 687.

[21] Ibid., p. 687

[22] Phocylides, "Elegiac Poems," Elegy and Iambus I, ed. and trans. J. M. Edmonds (London, 1931), p. 175, fr. 5, l.1ff. (Diehl, fr. 5)

[23] Phocylides, Ibid., p. 173, fr. 1, l.1ff. (Diehl fr. 1.)

is seen as a terse, satirical statement.

The early epigrams, however, were not all of a satiric nature. Simonides of Ceos employed various couplets to honor the heroes slain in battle. In tribute to those who laid down their lives at Thermopylae he wrote these lines:

> Stranger, at Sparta tell to passers-by,
> That here, obedient to her laws, we lie.[24]

In summing up the attributes of early Greek elegy, it may be noted that the verses paying tribute to the dead, such as the inscription on the tombstone at Perachora[25] and the lines by Archilochus concerning his drowned friends,[26] were soon overshadowed by martial elegies. The warlike times in which they lived prompted Callinus, Archilochus, Tyrtaeus, Solon, and Simonides to write on this subject. The elegies of Solon, Theognis, and Phocylides also served to pass along practical advice. Theognis and Mimnermus both urged their readers to make the most of youth, and Mimnermus alone,as far as can be determined from surviving fragments, wrote love-elegies.[27] Thus, from the writings of the early elegists may be seen the versatility of the form and the variety of the themes that were to influence later writers.

[24] Simonides, "Fragments," Elegiac and Iambic Poetry, A. and M. Croiset (New York, 1904), p. 109. (Diehl, fr. 92.)

[25] See above, p. 2.

[26] See above, p. 3.

[27] Alcaeus (born c. 620 B.C.) and Sappho (born c. 612 B.C.) both wrote love poetry, but in other than the elegiac meter (OCD, s.v., "Alcaeus," p. 29, s.v., "Sappho," p. 792).

## CHAPTER II

## THE ALEXANDRIAN ELEGISTS

While elegies continued to be written from the time of Simonides to the middle of the third century B.C., few fragments have survived. Toward the end of this period, however, significant developments were beginning to take place. The poets were becoming men of letters, surrounded by libraries, and their works were being composed, to an increasing extent, for a small circle of scholars. With the increase in learning came an increased interest in mythology, as shown by the fragments that have survived, and it was during the early part of the Alexandrian period, as well, that love became one of the chief subjects of elegy.

The center in which the new elegies flourished was Alexandria, and one of the early exponents to rise to a place of prominence was Philetas, born at Cos in the latter part of the fourth century B.C.[28] Where Mimnermus had addressed his elegies to a mistress named Nanno, Philetas wrote amorous poems to Bittis. Only fifty disconnected lines of his poetry have survived, but it is known that he was accepted as a master of his art by Propertius.[29] Philetas wrote amorous, mythological elegy, as did his Roman admirer.

Numerous poets followed the precedents set by Philetas,

[28] Barber in OCD, s.v., "Philetas," p. 678. Text: J. U. Powell, Collectanea Alexandrina (1925), 90- 6.

[29] Evidence of this fact is found in Propertius, IV, i.

notable among whom were Hermesianax of Colophon,[30] Phanocles,[31] and Alexander of Aetolia.[32] Hermesianax wrote three books of elegies, named for his mistress, Leontium. Phanocles composed an elegiac poem, Amours, or the Beautiful Youths, and dealt with ancient legends. Alexander of Aetolia wrote two books of elegies, Apollo and The Muses.

The Alexandrian poet who had the strongest influence on subsequent elegy was Callimachus, born at Cyrene toward the close of the fourth century B.C.[33] He was a grammarian, and served, in later years, as director of the library of Alexandria. Callimachus' chief elegiac poem was the Origins, a work contained in four volumes. Two of his elegies have been preserved in their entirety, The Bath of Pallas and, in a translation by Catullus, The Lock of Berenice. If Callimachus may be judged by the surviving fragments, he seems to have been primarily concerned with novelty, antiquity, and myths. His elegies are concisely and discerningly appraised by Couat in Alexandrian Poetry under the First Three Ptolemies: "In the descriptive parts we find a straining for smart and unexpected features; in the narrative parts, a marked liking for childish 'naivete' or for witty antitheses; in his composition as a whole, a transparent effort to make light of the sublimity of the theme and to reduce each myth to the scale of a 'genre' picture;

[30] Barber in OCD, s.v., "Hermesianax," p. 418.

[31] Barber in OCD, s.v., "Phanocles," p. 674.

[32] Barber in OCD, s.v., "Alexander (8)," pp. 34 - 5.

[33] Barber in OCD, s.v., "Callimachus (3)," pp. 157 - 8. Text: U. von Wilamowitz - Moellendorff, Callimachi Hymni et Epigrammata (1925).

and finally, in his style, very adroit handling, sustained elegance, and an occasional delicate touch--these are the qualities and the shortcomings."[34]

Callimachus' purpose in writing was primarily to delight, only secondarily to instruct. Even The Causes, which might be expected from its title to be a purely didactic book, is full of the fanciful myths which the author claims to have dreamt. In this regard it is interesting to note that Propertius, who called himself the "Roman Callimachus" also derived inspiration in like manner:

> Visvs eram molli recubans Heliconis in umbra,
> Bellerophontei qua fluit humor equi . . .
> cum me Castalia speculans ex arbore Phoebus
> sic ait, aurata nixus ad antra lyra.
>
> (III, iii, 1-2, 13-14)

Propertius and Ovid pursued Callimachus' interest in mythology, and both poets were undoubtedly influenced by such romantic elegies as "Cydippe," found in the Aetia.

Euphorion of Chalcis,[35] born about 276 B.C., showed more of the doctus than of the poeta, a fact which, according to Carter,[36] greatly increased his popularity in Rome. Cornelius Gallus was strongly influenced by him and made a translation of some of his epyllia into Latin.[37] Cicero, grouping together the poetae novi who had come under the Alexandrian influence, spoke of them as cantores Euphorionis

[34] Auguste Couat, Alexandrian Poetry under the First Three Ptolemies, trans. James Loeb (London, 1931), p. 117.

[35] Barber in OCD, s.v., "Euphorion (2)," p. 346.

[36] Jesse B. Carter, The Roman Elegiac Poets (Boston, 1909), p. xii.

[37] According to Servius (Momigliano and Duff in OCD, s.v., "Gallus (3)," p. 379).

(Tusc. 3.45).

The last of the notable Alexandrians to influence the Roman elegists was Parthenius of Nicaea,[38] an author of particular interest because of his Roman connections. His town was captured in 73 B. C., and he was brought as a prisoner to Rome where the father of the poet Cinna bought and freed him. Parthenius became ~~a very~~ an intimate friend of Gallus to whom he dedicated a compilation of Greek myths dealing with unhappy love-affairs. Gallus, in turn, may well have used these myths as a source of material for his love-elegies.

While the longer mythological and romantic elegies continued to be written throughout the Alexandrian period, increasing popularity was gained by short, epigrammatic elegies. These latter poems, with their mythological motifs, love terms, affectation, and wit, were the means through which an increasing number of authors came to display their learning and skill.

The evolution of the themes of the epigrams is illustrated by figures compiled by Couat: "In reading Alexandrian epigrams we are at once struck by the number of erotic epigrams. Of Asclepiades' 45 epigrams, 31 are erotic; we possess but 11 epigrams of Rhianus, and they are all erotic; those by Poseidippus comprise 8 erotic ones and those by Callimachus comprise 15 of that nature. On the other hand, among the sixty odd epigrams attributed to Simonides, only one is erotic..."[39]

[38] Rattenbury in OCD, s.v., "Parthenius," p. 650.

[39] Couat, ibid., p. 181.

In the Alexandrian epigrams, love had become "not a passion, but a pastime." Included in these poems were many of the topics which were to be reworked by subsequent Roman and English writers. In a poem that foreshadows Robert Herrick's ever popular, "To the Virgins, to make much of Time,"

> Gather ye Rose-buds while ye may,
> Old Time is still a-flying....

Asclepiades reasons with a girl, "Thou grudgest thy maidenhead? What avails it? When thou goest to Hades thou shalt find none to love thee there."[40]

Asclepiades, Poseidippus, and many of the other Alexandrian poets repeatedly refer to the god of love as a bitter, flighty creature who laughs at the wounds his arrows have inflicted.[41] Love is also spoken of as a flame that consumes to the very bone.[42] Here is a theme frequently followed by the Latin poets and their successors.

Many Alexandrian epigrams deal with the sorrows of a lover who has been locked out by his mistress. Attempting to sleep on the doorstep, one such unfortunate exclaims, "Mayst thou so sleep, Conopion, as thou makest me sleep by these cold portals; mayst thou sleep even so, cruel one, as thou sendest him who loves thee to sleep. Not a shadow

[40] Asclepiades, "Fragments," Alexandrian Poetry under the First Three Ptolemies, trans. James Loeb (London, 1931), p. 182 (Anthol. Palat. v. 85.) (LCL, Greek Anthol. i. p. 169.)

[41] Asclepiades, Greek Anthol. v. 189.
Poseidippus, Greek Anthol. v. 194.

[42] Asclepiades, Greek Anthol. v. 189
Poseidippus, Greek Anthol. v. 211.

of pity touched thee. The neighbours take pity on me, but thou not a shadow. One day shall the grey hairs come to remind thee of all this."[43]

An estimation of the contribution of the Alexandrians to elegy is hampered by the loss of much of the material. Although manuscripts containing an appreciable portion of Callimachus' Aetia and the Lock of Berenice have been preserved (the latter also preserved in a translation by Catullus, LXVI), only a few of the titles and scant fragments of the works of such important authors as Philetas of Cos and Euphorion of Chalcis remain. Only in the field of the epigram is there a sizeable body of material to which to refer.

In the field of the longer elegy ~~proper~~, poems written to a mistress, such as those by Philetas to Bittis, may well have been the inspiration for the Latin elegists to write to the mistresses of their verse. While it may not be affirmed with certainty, it is also possible that the practice of substituting a fictitious name for the real name of the mistress may have originated with the Alexandrians.

Many of the themes of the Alexandrian epigram, such as the animal amatory poem,[43a] the lover locked out, dawn too soon, and Cupid and his arrows and fire, appear again in the Latin love-elegy, as will be seen in the subsequent chapters. Consequently, it seems probable that the elegists of Rome drew inspiration from the Alexandrian writers of both the elegy proper and the epigram.

[43] Cited by Couat, p. 186. (Anthol. Palat. v. 23) (LCL, Greek Anthol., p. 141.)

[43a] Animal amatory: e.g. Catullus II, III; Ovid, Am., II, vi.

## CHAPTER III

## THE EARLY LATIN ELEGISTS, CATULLUS, AND GALLUS

From the time of Livius Andronicus (c. 284 - c. 204) Latin literature had been based on Greek models.[43a] It is not strange, therefore, that the Greek epigram and the Greek elegy should find imitators in Rome. Indeed, from the time of Ennius, Latin epigrams had been written in the elegiac meter.[44] In the beginning of the first century B.C., however, there seems to have been a special interest in short pieces of the sort written by the Alexandrian poets. Thus, Catulus, consul in 102 B.C. and joint conqueror with Marius at Vercellae, wrote in this manner as did Valerius Aedituus.[45] Other early authors of elegiac verse included Cassius of Parma; Publius Terentius Varro Atacinus, who wrote in praise of Leucadia; and Gaius Licinius Calvus, the friend of Catullus, who sang of his wife Quintilia.[46] The fact that the last two of these elegists directed their elegies toward women may suggest that their work resembled that of Philetas of Cos, who wrote of Bittis.

[43a] Warmington in OCD, s.v., "Livius (1) Andronicus," p. 509.

[44] Warmington in OCD, s.v., "Ennius," p. 316. Three of the epigrams attributed to Ennius are preserved in Cicero (Tusc. I, xv, 34; V, xvii, 49; Legg., II, xxii, 57), collected by Baehrens, FPR, p. 125.

[45] Preserved in Gell., XIX, ix, 14, and Cic. Nat. Deor., I, xxviii, 79=Baehrens, FPR, pp. 275 - 6. Preserved in Gell., XIX, ix, 11=Baehrens 1,1.

[46] Carter, p. xiv.

The most notable Latin elegists, however, and the ones to whom the ensuing discussion will be largely limited, are as follows: Gaius Valerius Catullus, Gaius Cornelius Gallus, Albius Tibullus, Sextus Propertius, Publius Ovidius Naso.

Catullus, born in 84 B.C., was the son of an aristocratic family of Verona, a town in Transpadane Gaul.[47] Moving to Rome in 62 B.C.,[48] he fell passionately in love with the Lesbia of his poems, generally believed to have been Clodia, wife of the consul Metellus Celer.[49] When Lesbia favoured Catullus with her love, he experienced almost indescribable delight; when she turned her attention elsewhere, he was cast into depths of depression.[49a]

Catullus' poems to and about Lesbia, however, are only part of his verse production, which includes short pieces in elegiac meter, longer and more formal elegies, epyllia, and verses in a variety of meters. What he might have achieved if he had lived longer can only be inferred. But while still a young man, he died in 54 B.C..[50]

In the manuscripts of Catullus ~~as we have them~~, as suggested above, there is a melange of short pieces and longer poems. Many of the short pieces ( LXIX-CXVI) are in the elegiac meter, and are epigrams in the Greek sense of the term. Many of them, however, (I=LX) are written in other meters such as the hendecasyllabic meter. It is not likely that this latter group of poems are a Catullan innovation.

[47] A. M. Duff in OCD, s.v., "Catullus (1) 1," p. 175.

[48] Ibid. p. 175.

[49] Ibid. p. 175.

[50] Ibid. p. 175.

[49a] See below, p. 19.

Laevius Melissus, who flourished in Rome at the time of Catulus, published an Erotopaegnia (Sports of Love) in Greek, which consisted of a number of short pieces in varying meters.[50a] In this respect, too, it is likely that the Alexandrian poets had anticipated the Romans.

So far as poems in the elegiac meter are concerned, according to the arrangement in the Catullan manuscripts, the first to be written in elegiac meter is LXV. This poem, addressed to Hortalus, deals with one of the recurring themes of Greek and Latin elegy, the mourning of the poet for a loved one who has died. In this case Catullus gives expression to the deep grief he feels at the loss of his only brother:

> Etsi me assiduo confectum cura dolore
> sevocat a doctis, Hortale, virginibus,
> nec potis est dulcis Musarum expromere fetus
> mens animi, tantis fluctuat ipsa malis:
> namque mei nuper Lethaeo gurgite fratris
> palidulum manans alluit unda pedem,
> Troia Rhoeteo quem subter litore tellus
> ereptum nostris obterit ex oculis.

> Though I am worn out with constant grief, Hortalus, and sorrow calls me away, apart from the learned Maids, nor can the thoughts of my heart utter the sweet births of the Muses, tossed as it is in such waves of trouble; so lately the creeping wave of the Lethaean flood has lapped my own brother's death-pale foot, on whom, torn away from our sight, under the shore of Rhoeteum the soil of Troy lies heavy.[51]

In his grief, Catullus explains that he is unable to write anything original; instead, he is sending Hortalus a poem translated from Callimachus, "The Lock of Berenice" (LXVI). This poem is a

[51] Catullus, Gaius Valerius, The Poetical Works, trans. F. W. Cornish (Loeb Classical Library, London, 1931), selection LXV, lines 1 - 8. All subsequent excerpts and translations from Catullus, unless otherwise noted, are from the above, referred to within the work by selection number and line.

[50a] Barker in OCD, s.v., "Laevius," p. 478.

scholarly work in which the discovery by Conon of Samos of a constellation, the Lock of Berenice, is entwined with traditional mythology in polished Alexandrian style to pay tribute to Berenice, daughter of King Magas of Cyrene and wife of Ptolemy III. The translation of this poem into Latin by Catullus is an indication of the Roman poet's admiration for his Alexandrian predecessors and Callimachus in particular.

In Catullus' next poem, LXVII, a mixture of humor and satire, a loquacious house-door tells the poet of the love-affairs of the young lady who has recently moved into the house. Needless to say, these lines bear little resemblance to the subjective love poetry of the succeeding Latin elegists, since it is the house-door rather than the new lady of the house who is giving the account.

The finest of Catullus' elegies, LXVIII, "To Allius," most closely resembles the work of the later Latin elegists. Its complexity and interweaving of themes, however, make it far more elaborate than the average elegy. The poem is, first of all, a letter to Catullus' friend Manlius; it is also a mythological poem, dealing with the Trojan war and the love of Laodamia. Superimposed on this background are lines of sorrow at the death of Catullus' only brother,

> o misero frater adempte mihi,
> tu mea tu moriens fregisti commoda, frater,
> tecum una totast nostra sepulta domus . . . .

> Ah me unhappy, who have lost you, my brother! You, brother, you by your death have destroyed my happiness; with you all my house is buried . . . .
>
> (LXVIII, 20 - 22)

and lines of love for Lesbia,

nec tamen illa mihi dextra deducta paterna
fragrantem Assyrio venit odore domum,
sed furtiva dedit mira munuscula nocte . . .

And after all she did not come for me led by her father's hand into a house fragrant with Assyrian odours, but gave me in the wonderous night sweet stolen gifts.

(LXVIII, 143 - 5)

Like the later Latin elegists, the poet finds his mistress unfaithful. Manlius writes.

Veronae turpe, Catulle,
esse, quod hic quisquis de meliore notast
frigida deserto tepefecit membra cubili.

It is no credit to you, Catullus, to be at Verona; because here, where I am, all the young men of better condition warm their cold limbs in the bed deserted by you.

(LXVIII, 27 - 29)

In response to such news, Catullus seeks to console himself with legends from mythology:

saepe etiam Iuno, maxima caelicolum,
coniugis in culpa flagrantem concoquit iram,
noscens omnivoli plurima furta Iovis.

Juno, too, greatest of the heavenly ones, often keeps down her anger for her husband's fault, as she learns the many loves of all-amorous Jove.

(LXVIII, 138 - 140)

The remainder of Catullus' poems in the elegiac meter, LXIX to CXVI, with the possible exception of LXXVI, are epigrammatic in nature. CI mourns the loss of his brother. CXVI tells of inspiration sought in the writings of Callimachus. Some of these shorter poems also satirize individuals, and several speak of Lesbia. LXXXV, although the shortest of the epigrams, sums up the emotions which dominated Catullus' life once he had fallen in love with his beautiful but faithless mistress:

Odi et amo. quare id faciam, fortasse requiris.
nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.

The above lines are neatly translated by Kevin Guinagh:

I loathe and love, but why I cannot tell.
I simply feel that way and suffer hell.[52]

While Catullus' name does not appear in Quintilian's list of Latin elegists,[53] perhaps because his verses in other meters outnumber and overshadow his work in this field, it would be a mistake to overlook or underestimate his contribution to the Latin elegy. He was the first Latin poet whose work was dominated by a great passion, and he used the elegiac meter to express some of his deepest feelings.

In addition, it seems likely that Catullus, more than any other Latin poet, bridged the gap between Greek and Latin elegy. He did this in part by his interpretations and imitations of Callimachus. Undoubtedly he read the works of the Alexandrian elegists current in his time. Another important contribution was his addition of short pieces in varying meters, written along with the standard Greek epigram. Furthermore, his writings include some of the themes of the Greek epigram, such as the animal amatory in the poems on Lesbia's sparrow (II, III). Most of all, however, the passion and fire in his poems to Lesbia were to set a precedent for his successors.

[52] Guinagh and Dorjahn, Latin Literature in Translation (Toronto, 1954) p. 305.

[53] Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, X, i, 93 - 96.

It is Gaius Cornelius Gallus (70 - 27 B.C.),[54] however, who is credited by Quintilian with initiating the Latin love-elegy. He was born in Forum Iulii (modern Frejus) in southern Gaul. After fighting side by side with Augustus at Actium he was appointed to the very powerful position of governor of Egypt. Having become too proud as a result of his sudden rise in social and political prominence, Gallus lost the favour of Augustus, and with it his life. Found guilty by the senate of maladministration of his province, he committed suicide in 27 B.C. at the age of forty-three.

A younger member of the circle of neoteric poets,[55] he was writing perhaps ten or more years after Catullus, at the time when Vergil was composing the Eclogues, the last of which is dedicated to Gallus. The object of Gallus' affection was a freedwoman, Volumnia, a mime actress, whom he addressed in his verses as Lycoris.[56] In this respect, as already seen, he was following the practice of Catullus. According to tradition, she deserted him in order that she might follow Mark Antony to Gaul. Gallus was strongly influenced by the elegiac style of Euphorion, some of whose writings he translated, and he was undoubtedly interested in mythology since Parthenius dedicated a book to him on this subject.[57]

[54] See the following on Gallus' life:
Momigliano and Duff in OCD, s.v., "Gallus (3)," p. 379.
Carter, pp. xxiii - xxiv.

[55] Momigliano and Duff in OCD, s.v., "Gallus (3)," p. 379.

[56] Ibid., p. 379.

[57] Ibid., p. 379. Carter, p. XXIV.

In the field of poetry, Gallus belonged to the group of neoteric poets, already referred to, who occupied the literary field after the death of Catullus. Some of the members of this group, such as Cinna and Cornificius had belonged to the Catullan circle. Others such as Vergil and Gallus were new additions. This group was scattered by the civil war which followed the assasination of Caesar. What distinguished the group as a whole was a tendency to imitate the more obscure Alexandrian poets, such as Philetas and Euphorion. Gallus himself was a close friend of Vergil, as indicated by the fact that Vergil's tenth Eclogue is addressed to him.

As for Gallus' writings, they have all been lost with the exception of one incomplete line quoted by Vibius Sequester.[58] Although his elegies have not survived, his reputation as an elegist lives on. As Ovid states in his Amores:

> Gallus et Hesperiis et Gallus notus Eois,
> et sua cum Gallo nota Lycoris erit.

> Gallus shall be known to Hesperia's sons, and Gallus to the sons of Eos, and known with Gallus shall his own Lycoris be.[59]

Because of the loss of his verse, what Gallus contributed to the Latin love-elegy can only be inferred. In view of the reputation assigned to him as the creator of the genre, it is fair to assume that he initiated many of the themes used by his successors.

[58] Vibius Sequester, p. 11 (Oberl.) (-Baehrens, FPR, p. 336): "uno tellures dividit amne duas."

[59] Ovidius, Publius Naso, Amores, trans. Grant Showerman (London, 1914), book I, selection xv, lines 29 - 30.

## CHAPTER IV

## TIBULLUS

While Gallus is credited with establishing Latin love-elegy, itwas Albius Tibullus (54 - 19 B.C.), [60] however, who was the first to pass on a sizeable collection of elegies to posterity. Born in the region immediately northeast of Rome, he came of wealthy parents, although it is believed that much of the family's land was taken for distribution among the veterans in 41 B.C. There is no doubt, however, but that he held a place of respect in Roman society.[61]

A collection of poems in three books is ascribed in the manuscripts to Tibullus. Books one and two are certainly his; the authorship of the third has not been positively established. Quite possibly it is a composite of the writings of several poets, brought together by the common bond of Messalla's patronage.[62]

The style of Tibullus[63] is simple, clear, and direct, in

[60] See the following on Tibullus' life:
Hammer in OCD, s.v., "Tibullus," pp. 907 - 8.
Carter, pp. xxv - xxvii. Sellar, pp. 225 - 235. Luck, pp. 62 - 65.

[61] Horace respected Tibullus, addressing him as "impartial critic of my Satires" (Epistles, I, iv, 1.), and Ovid valued his friendship (Amores, III, ix.) Also see Carter, p. xxvii.

[62] This point is discussed in detail by J. P. Postgate in Selections from Tibullus (ed. 2, 1910), pp. xxxiv - li, pp.179 - 184.

[63] Information on the style of Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid is from the following sources, as well as from observations by the author: Carter, pp. xxviii - xxx, pp. xxxvii - xxxviii, pp. xlii - xliii; Grant, pp. 171 - 174, pp. 223 - 224; Luck, pp. 71 - 75, pp. 113 - 116, pp. 151 - 157. Additional information on the style of Ovid is from the Ovidiana, ed. T. F. Herescu (Paris, 1958): W. F. Jackson Knight, "Ovids Metre and Rythm"; T. F. Higham, "Ovid and Rhetoric."

keeping with his subject matter. His vocabulary consists of a rather small number of carefully chosen words. There are few Greek words, few uncommon words, and few of the colloquialisms so often used by Catullus. Verbs are almost always employed in their literal sense, rather than metaphorically. Each word is so placed that its full significance is emphasized without interruption of the smooth flow of the rhythm. As Tibullus' words are simple and direct, so are his phrases. Each thought is usually contained within a single distich.

It is also significant, in connection with his style, that Tibullus, a lover of antiquity, should look to the older school of Greek elegists for his models. As Carter notes, "His writings are almost free from the chief characteristic of Alexandrian poetry, abstruse erudition manifested especially in the heaping up of mythological parallels."[64] As Horace is the representative of pre-Alexandrian lyric in Rome, Tibullus is the representative of pre-Alexandrian elegy.

A strong force was exerted in Tibullus' life by his patron, Messalla, who assisted the poet with material support, advice, and encouragement. Tibullus was with Messalla at Actium in 31 B.C. and would have followed him to Asia had he not become ill at Corcyra.[65] He did, however, join Messalla again for the campaign in Aquitania in 28 B.C.

The friendship which existed between Tibullus and Messalla is shown by the freguent tributes which the poet pays to his patron. In the "Ambarvalia," one of his finest poems, he envisions the country

[64] Carter, p. xxix.

[65] Tibullus, I, iii.

people who have gathered for the festival drinking a toast:

> sed "bene Messallam" sua quisque ad pocula dicat,
> nomen et absentis singula verba sonent.

> But let each one, as he drinks, cry, 'Health to Messalla!'
> and in every utterance be the name of the absent heard.[66]

When Messalla's son, Messalinus, was first appointed to public office, Tibullus took the opportunity to praise the young man and prophesy a bright future for him. Looking forward to a time when Messalinus, like his father, would lead victorious armies, he wrote:

> tunc Messalla meus pia det spectacula turbae
> et plaudat curru praetereunte pater.

"Then let my dear Messalla afford the throng the sight of a father's love, and clap his hands as his son's car passes by."

(II, v, 119 - 120)

On more than one occasion, Tibullus pays tribute to Messalla's prowess as a general. In justification of his patron's exploits, he declares,

> te bellare decet terra, Messalla, marique,
> ut domus hostiles praeferat exuvias . . . .

> 'Tis right for thee, Messalla, to campaign on land and sea that
> on thy house's front may show the spoils of foemen . . . .

(I, i, 53 - 54)

In praise of the general's triumph over the Aquitanians, he writes,

> . . . novos pubes Romana triumphos
> vidit et evinctos bracchia capta duces:
> at te victrices lauros, Messalla gerentem
> portabat nitidis currus eburnus equis.

[66] Tibullus, Albius, The Elegies, trans. J. P. Postgate (Loeb Classical Library, London, 1931), book II, selection i, lines 31 - 32. All subsequent excerpts and translations from Tibullus are from the above, referred towithin the work by book, selection, and line.

> The men of Rome have seen new triumphs, and chiefs with shackles on their captive arms, whilst thou, Messalla, wearing the conqueror's bays, wast borne in ivory car by steeds of shining white.
>
> (I, vii, 5 - 8)

One of the strongest indications of the high regard which Tibullus felt for Messalla is perhaps found in the passage in which he dreams of living on the estate with his mistress. Where some lovers might have thought in terms of a twosome, Tibullus includes his patron as well:

> huc veniet Messalla meus, cui dulcia poma
> Delia selectis detrahat arboribus . . . ,

> Hither shall come my own Messalla. From chosen trees shall Delia pull him down sweet fruit . . . ,
>
> (I, v, 31 - 32),

and when the time has come for Tibullus to die, he wants his patron's name to appear on his tombstone:

> HIC IACET IMMITI CONSVMPTVS MORTE TIBVLLVS,
> MESSALLAM TERRA DVM SEQVITVRQVE MARI.

> HERE LIES TIBVLLVS, RAVISHED BY DEATH'S HAND,
> MESSALLA COMRADING O'ER SEA AND LAND.
>
> (I, iii, 55 - 56)

Lines such as these surely give proof of a deep-rooted friendship. It is quite probable that it was Messalla's influence which prompted Tibullus to write in praise of Rome.

Thus, while he is not primarily a writer of patriotic verse, lines on this subject do, however, appear. In "The Installation of Messalinus" is a pseudo-prophecy of Rome's greatness which, on a small scale, bears resemblance to Vergil's great lines in Book VI of the <u>Aeneid</u>:

carpite nunc, tauri, de septem montibus herbas
dum licet; hic magnae iam locus urbis erit.
Roma, tuum nomen terris fatele regendis,
qua sua de caelo prospicit arva Ceres,
quaque patent ortus et qua fluitantibus undis
Solis anhelantes abluit amnis equos.

Now, while ye may, bulls, crop the grass of the Seven Hills. Ere long this will be a great city's site. Thy nation, Rome, is fated to rule the earth wherever Ceres looks from heaven upon the fields she tends, both where the gates of dawn are opened and where in tossing waters the Ocean river bathes the Sun-god's panting team.
(II, v, 55 - 60)

In the same poem he looks forward to days of prosperity when the barns will be able to hold no more grain and the vats of wine will be filled to overflowing.

One of the themes that is manifestly evident in Tibullus' writings is his hatred of war. In the very first lines of his first elegy, he disassociates himself from those who would endure routed slumbers and fighting for the sake of material gain. The very words Tibullus choses to deal with war bespeak his intense dislike. He speaks of the <u>belli mala signa</u>, "the 'evil' sign of war" (II, v, 71), <u>horrendos enses</u>, "the 'horrible' sword" (I, x, 1), and <u>tristia arma</u>, "'grim' warfare" (I, x, 11 - 12), to cite only a few examples. The man who choses to follow war, the poet insists, is himself iron (I, ii, 65).

Tibullus has the courage to admit that he is fearful of war:

. . . iam quis forsitan hostis
haesura in nostro tela gerit latere.

. . . some foeman, maybe, already bears the weapon that is to be buried in my side.
(I, x, 13 - 14)

He is quite content to follow the battle from a safe distance:

> . . . alius sit fortis in armis,
> sternat et adversos Marte favente duces,
> ut mihi potanti possit sua dicere facta
> miles et in mensa pingere castra mero.

> Let another be stout in war and, Mars to aid him, lay the hostile chieftains low, that, while I drink, he may tell me of his feats in fighting and draw the camp in wine upon the table.
>
> (I, x, 29 - 32)

at nobis, Pax alma, veni . . . , "Then come to us gracious Peace . . ." (I, x, 67), Tibullus entreats. . . . vos, signa tubaeque,/ite procul, cupidis vulnera ferte viris,/ferte et opes . . . , "Begone, ye trumpets and ensigns! take wounds to the men of greed, and take them wealth" (I, i, 75 - 77).

" . . . take wounds to the men of greed, and take them wealth." Tibullus shows some keen insight into one of the causes of war, the lust for material gain, and he is no less severe in dealing with this contributing factor than he is in dealing with war itself.

Divitias alius fulvo sibi congerat auro . . . , "Let others heap up their treasure of yellow gold . . . " (I, i, 1), Tibullus writes. As for him, he prefers the quiet beauty of nature (I, i, 27 - 28). This sentiment is more than poetic convention. Tibullus, who, it will be recalled, ~~had~~ may have lost most of his ancestral holdings to the veterans in 41 B.C., goes on to declare,

> non ego divitias patrum fructusque requiro,
> quos tulit antiquo condita messis avo:
> parva seges satis est . . . .

> I ask not for the riches of my sires or the gains which garnered harvests brought to my ancestors of yore. A small field's produce is enough . . . .
>
> (I, i, 41 - 43)

Tibullus illustrates the fact that the Latin elegist, like his Greek predecessors, could deal with a variety of subject matter. His major interest, however, was the love-elegy.

Love, he wishes to emphasize, is worth more than any wealth:

> o quantum est auri pereat potiusque smaragdi,
> quam fleat ob nortras ulla puella vias.

> Ah, sooner let all the gold and all the emeralds perish from the world than any maiden weep for my departings,
> (I, i, 51 - 52)

and again, with a slightly different presentation of the same idea, he repeats the theme:

> non lapis hanc gemmaeque iuvant, quae frigore sola
> dormiat et nulli sit cupienda viro.

> No stone or pearls will give her joy who sleeps alone and chill, and to no man is desirable.
> (I, viii, 39 - 40)

The most eloquent expression of the idea that love is the greatest treasure in the world is found in Tibullus' lines to Cornutus on the occasion of his birthday:

> auguror, uxoris fidos optabis amores;
> iam reor hoc ipsos edidicisse deos.
> nec tibi malueris, totum quaecumque perorbem
> fortis arat valido rusticus arva bove,
> nec tibi, gemmarum quidquid felicibus Indis
> nascitur, Eoi qua maris unda rubet.

> I divine that thou wilt pray for thy wife's true love; by now methinks the gods have learned this well. Thou wouldst not have rather for thine own all the fields in the whole world that stout yeomen plough with sturdy steers, nor for thine all pearls soever that grow for India the blest by the red waters of the Eastern sea.
> (II, ii, 11 - 16)

In writing the love-elegy, however, Tibullus interweaves other themes which appear to be of peculiar interest to him. Thus, he lists many of the ills which accompany the greed so prevelant in what he describes as the ferrea saecula "iron age" (II, iii, 35 ff.): strife, raging armies, bloodshed, slaughter, and death. Elsewhere he affirms,

> divitis hoc vitium est auri, nec bella fuerunt,
> faginus astabat cum scyphus ante dapes.
> non arces, non vallus erat, somnumque petebat
> securus varias dux gregis inter oves.

> This is the curse of precious gold; nor were there wars when the cup of beechwood stood beside men's food. There were no citadels, no palisades, and void of care the flock's commander courted sleep with his sheep of divers hue around him.
> (I, x, 7 - 10)

Similarly, Tibullus often looks back with longing to the good old days of yore:

> quam bene Saturno vivebant rege, priusquam
> tellus in longas est patefacta vias!

> How well lived folk in olden days when Saturn was king, before the earth was opened out for distant travel!
> (I, iii, 35 - 36)

Times were better, he believes, before people sailed the seas or plowed the fields for gain, when houses needed no locks and farms no boundary markers, when wars had not yet begun to ravage mankind.

Indications of Tibullus' interest in an earlier period appear throughout his verses. He credits Osiris with being the first to teach man to plough the fields, sow the seeds, care for the vines, and crush the grapes (I, vii, 29 ff). In another instance he attributes this instruction to the gods of his own countryside:

rura cano rurisque deos. his vita magistris
desuevit querna pellere glande famem.

They were the guides when man first ceased to chase his hunger with acorns from the oak.

(II, i. 37 - 38)

Tibullus regards times gone by as having been more favourable for lovers:

felices olim, Vereri cum fertur aperte
servire aeternos non puduisse deos.
fabula nunc ille est: sed cui sua cura puella est,
fabula sit mavult quam sine amore deus.

Happy the men of olden days, when they tell that gods eternal were not ashamed to be the open slaves of passion. Now is he the talk of all. But one that loves his girl would liefer be the talk of all than a god without love.

(II, iii, 29 - 28)

glans alat et prisco more bibantur aquae.
glans alat veteres, et passim semper amarunt;
quid nocuit sulcos non habuisse satos?
tunc, quibus aspirabat Amor, praebebat aperte
mitis in umbrosa gaudia valle Venus.
nullus erat custos, nulla exclusura dolentes
ianua. si fas est, mos precor ille redi.

. . . let acorns be our fare and water our drink in the olden way. Acorns were the foods of the ancients, and they had love always wherever they were. What hurt to them if they had no furrows sown with seed? Then to those on whom Love's god breathed kindly did gentle Venus bring open pleasures in the shady vales. No watchers were there, nor door to close against the anguished. If it be not wrong, old custom, I pray thee to return.

(II, iii, 68 - 74)

Tibullus loves the simple customs and symbols of antiquity and assumes that his gods will do the same:

adsitis, divi, neu vos e paupere mensa
dona nec e puris spernite fictilibus.--
fictilia antiquus primum sibi fecit agrestis
pocula, de facili composuitque luto.--

> Be with me, Gods: nor scorn gifts from a humble board and on clean earthenware. Earthen were the drinking-cups which the ancient yokel made himself, modelling them from pliant clay.
>
> (I, i, 37 - 40)

Not only does Tibullus expect his gods to take pleasure in gifts served in the rustic fashion of times gone by; the very gods themselves, or at least their symbols, themselves bespeak an unsophistocated age:

> sed patrii servate Lares: aluistis et idem,
> cursarem vestros cum tener ante pedes.
> neu pudeat prisco vos esse stipite factos:
> sic veteris sedes incoluistis avi.

> Yet save me, Lares of my fathers! Ye too did rear me when I ran, a little child, before your feet. And feel it not a shame that ye are made of but an ancient tree-stock. Such were ye when ye dwelt in the home of my grandsire long ago.
>
> (I, x, 15 - 18)

This last passage illustrates an important factor of Tibullus' character. He is deeply religious. His worship is not that of grudging ritual, carried out in hope of selfish gain; instead, it is a spontaneous act of devotion:

> nam veneror, seu stipes habet desertus in agris
> seu vetus in trivio florida serta lapis . . . .

> For I bend in worship whenever flowery garlands be on deserted tree-stock in the fields or old stone at a crossway . . . .
>
> (I, i, 11 - 12)

He is always careful to see that the first fruits of his crops are offered to the gods: corn for Ceres, a heifer or a lamb for the Lares, and milk for Pales. It should be noted, too, that these are not bribes offered in advance, but thank-offerings from crops and herds that are already prospering.

In the same way the "Ambarvalia," which centers around the annual ceremony of purifying the crops, shows the solemnity with which

Tibullus regards such an observance. Thus, in his first words he writes, Quisquis adest, faveat, "All present hush" (II, i, 1), and the next words show the way in which the ceremony has been handed down from father to son, from generation:

> . . . fruges lustramus et agros,
> ritus ut a prisco traditus extat aevo.

> We purify the crops and lands in the fashion handed down from our ancestors of old.
>
> (II, i, 1- 2)

Included in the poem is a prayer for a blessing on the crops and herds and on those who look after them.

Similarly, when he is languishing in Phaeacia, far removed from friends, Tibullus recalls the rites which his mistress, Delia, has performed for the Egyptian deity, Isis, and in his distress, calls on her to help him. Even so, he leaves it for Delia to perform any ritualistic requirements among the Pharian throng. As for himself, he will pay homage to the household gods of his fathers:

> at mihi contingat patrios celebrare Penates
> reddereque antiquo menstrua tura Lari.

> And be it mine many times to stand before the shrine of my sire's Penates and offer incense, as the months come round, to the old Lar of my home.
>
> (I, iii, 33- 34)

In other instances, as well, it is to his household gods that Tibullus prays, as in the case of the poem against war: sed patrii servate Lares. . . . "Yet save me, Lares of my fathers! " (I, x, 15). The household gods, his Lares and Penates, are to him what a loving father is to a little child.

Tibullus' eschatological views vary in accordance with the subject on which he is writing. In the poem against war, in which he is attempting to persuade people not to slaughter each other, he depicts death in fearful terms:

> quis furor est atram bellis accersere Mortem?
> imminet et tacito clam venit illa pede.
> non seges est infra, non vinea culta, sed audax
> Cerberus et Stygiae navita turpis aquae;
> illic pertussisque genis ustoque capillo
> errat ad obscuros pallida turba lacus.

> What madness is it to call black Death to us by warfare! It is ever close upon us: it comes unseen on silent feet. Below there are neither cornlands nor well-kept vineyards; only wild Cerberus and the ill-favoured mariner of the stream of Styx. There wanders a sallow throng beside the dusky pools with eyeless sockets and fire-ravaged hair.
>
> (I, x, 33- 38)

On another occasion, although he again speaks of the torments of the damned, he declares that, because he has always been a willing servant of Love, Venus will lead him to Elysian fields, where the birds sing, scented roses bloom, and youths and maidens sport together.[66a] While the lines on this subject follow poetic convention, they may also be an indication of Tibullus' belief that the righteous would be rewarded and the wicked would be punished in an after-life.

Nevertheless, even if he does not fear eternal punishment, Tibullus looks with loathing on death:

> iam veniet tenebris Mors adoperta caput. . . .

> Soon will Death be here with his head cowled in dark.
>
> (I, i, 70)

> abstineas avidas Mors modo nigra manus.
> abstineas, Mors atra, precor. . . .

66a Tib. I, iii, 57- 66.

> Keep off thy greedy hands, I pray, black Death. Black Death,
> I pray thee keep them off.
>
> (I, iii, 4- 5)

The poet fears that he may die alone and unloved, with nobody to grieve at his departure (I,iii, 5ff; I, i, 59ff), on the one hand, and, at the same time, he hates death for the sorrow it brings to those bereaved.

Another theme frequently found in Tibullus' elegies is love for the country. He appreciates the beauties of nature, such as shady trees and rippling rills (I, i, 27- 28), but he also enjoys the work involved in operating a country estate:

> ipse seram teneras maturo tempore vites
> rusticus et facili grandia poma manu. . . .
> nec tamen interdum pudeat tenuisse bidentem
> aut stimulo tardos increpuisse boves;
> non agnamve sinu pigeat fetumve capellae
> desertum oblita matre referre domum.

> When the time is ripe, let me plant the tender vines and the stout orchard trees with my own deft hands, a countryman, indeed. . . . nor think it shame to grasp the hoe at times or chide the laggard oxen with the goad, nor a trouble to carry homewardsin my arms a ewe lamb or youngling goat forgotten by its dam and left alone.
>
> (I, i, 7- 8, 29- 32)

Tibullus longs to live on the farm with Delia (I, i, 71) and believes the man is truly blest who reaches a peaceful old age tending his flocks with the help of his sons (I, x, 41). Tibullus again expresses the wish to live on his estate, in the company of his mistress, in the elegy "To Delia" (I, v), and as he takes pleasure in the work involved, he expects her to do the same. Delia is to oversee the threshing of grain and the treading of grapes, she is to learn to count the flocks, and everyone on the estate is to be under her supervision.

Unfortunately, the longings of Tibullus were not to be fulfilled. Delia prefers another, and the poet is left to complain,

> . . . fruitur nunc alter amore,
> et precibus felix utitur ille meis.

> . . . another hath now my love. He is the fortunate one, and reaps the fruit of all my prayers.
>
> (I, v, 17- 18)

Thus, in the role of the lover locked out, Tibullus laments,

> me retinent vinctum formosae vincla puellae,
> et sedeo duras ianitor ante fores,

> . . . I am a captive fast bound in the bonds of a lovely girl;
> I sit a janitor before her stubborn doors,
>
> (I, i, 55- 56)

and again,

> nam posita est nostrae custodiae saeva puellae,
> clauditur et dura ianua firma sera.

> For a cruel watch has been set upon my girl, and the door is shut and bolted hard against me.
>
> (I, ii, 5- 6)

For a while Tibullus is in torment, comparing himself to a top spun across the ground with a lash (I, v, 3); but as time passes, he comes to realize that the life he longed for on the estate, with Delia to share it with him, will never be:

> haec mihi fingebam quae nunc Eurusque Notusque
> iactat odoratos vota per Armenios.

> Such were my dreams and prayers, now tossed from East Wind unto South over all Armenia's scented land.
>
> (I, v, 35- 36)

To fill the void that Delia had left when she had walked out of his life, Tibullus turns his attention to Nemesis. Like Catullus'

Lesbia, she is very beautiful, and like Catullus' Lesbia, she is a faithless mistress. Just as the earlier elegist had suffered under the fascinating spell of his mistress, Tibullus becomes a victim of Nemesis:

> illius est nobis lege colendus amor.
> quin etiam, sedes iubeat si vendere avitas,
> ite sub imperium sub titulumque, [67] Lares.
> Quidquid habet Circe, quidquid Medea veneni,
> quidquid et herbarum Thessala terra gerit,
> et quod, ubi indomitis gregibus Venus adflat amores,
> hippomanes cupidae stillat ab inquine equae,
> si modo me placido videat Nemesis mea vultu,
> mille alias herbas misceat illa, bibam.

> I must ply my love as she ordains. Yea, if she bid me sell the home of my forefathers, then, gods of the household, ye must stoop to be labelled [67] at her word. All Circe's, all Medea's potions, all the herbs that the land ot Thessaly bears, even the hippomanes which drips from the yearning mare when Venus breathes passion into unbridled herds, yea, a thousand herbs beside may my Nemesis mingle in the draught, and, so she look kindly on me, I will drink.
>
> (II, iv, 52- 60)

Tibullus writes on one occasion that for a year he has tried to flee from his mistress' fatal spell (II, v, 109); but no sooner does he leave than his foot comes back of its own accord (II, vi, 14). In this state he might well echo the lines of Catullus, Odi et amo, "I loathe and love. . . " (LXXXV).

In writing about the emotions that Delia stirred in him, and the fatal fascination that Nemesis held for him, Tibullus

[67] The "titulus" was the label affixed to objects for sale by auction.

employed a number of the themes of love-elegy. One is that the gods aid lovers. Tibullus declares that he is protected from violence, robbery, the cold of winter nights, and downpours of rain because he is a servant of Venus. By the same token, he urges Delia to receive him:

> tu quoque ne timide custodes, Delia, falle.
> audendum est: fortes adiuvat ipsa Venus.

> Do thou too, Delia, trick the guard with no faint spirit.
> Be bold: Venus herself aids the stout hearted.
> (I, ii, 15- 16)

In fact, Tibullus, along with the other elegists, even claims that the gods are willing to wink at the false oaths of lovers:

> nec iurare time: veneris periuria venti
> inrita per terras et freta summa ferunt.
> gratia magna Iovi. . . .

> Be not afraid to swear. Null and void are the perjuries of love; the wind bears them over land and the face of the sea. Great thanks to Jove!
> (I, iv, 21- 23)

As Asclepiades had urged the girls of Alexandria not to waste away their youth unloved,[68] Tibullus repeats the theme in Rome. He satirizes the old lover with dyed hair (I, viii, 44), and points out that just as the sunset fades and the poplar loøses its leaves, even so the beauty of youth passes swiftly.

[68] Anthol. Palat., V, 85. (LCL, Greek Anthol., i, p. 169.)

In perhaps his most vivid lines on the subject, Tibullus repeats his warning:

> interea, dum fata sinunt, iungamus amores;
> iam veniet tenebris Mors adoptera caput.

> Meanwhile, while Fate allows, let us be one in love. Soon will Death be here with his head cowled in dark.
> (I, i, 69- 70)

Using a common theme of love-elegy, Tibullus compares himself, a lover, to a soldier. In the sphere of love's warfare, he asserts, hic ego dux milesque bonus, " 'Tis here I am brave captain and private" (I, i, 75).

Tibullus is distressed that he lives in an age when love is bought and sold:

> at tua, qui venerem docuisti vendere primus,
> quisquis es, infelix urgeat ossa lapis.

" Whoever thou art that first didst teach the sale of love, may an unhallowed stone weigh heavy on thy bones."
(I, iv, 59- 60)

In poems to both Delia and Nemesis, he complains of the competition he is receiving from rich rivals. Of Delia he states,

> heu canimus frustra nec verbis victa patescit
> ianua sed plena est percutienda manu.

> Alas! In vain I sing; no words will win her door to open. Nay, the hand that knocks upon it must be filled.
> (I, v, 67- 68)

In like manner, Nemesis prefers money to poetry:

> nec prosunt elegi nec carminis auctor Apollo;
> illa cava pretium flagitat usque manu.

> Nor doth elegy help or Apollo, inspirer of my song. Her hallowed palm is ever stretched out for gold.
>
> (II, iv, 13- 14)

If times are such that crimes must be committed and temples plundered to please the avaricious girls, Tibullus is resolved to pillage Venus' temple first, since she has given him a greedy mistress.

Under such trying circumstances, with mistresses whose only fidelity is to the highest bidder, Tibullus is prompted to speak of love in the terms and imagery of the Alexandrians. Love is personified in Cupid, the youthful god who, feigning friendliness, ensnares the lover (I, vi, 1ff). He pierces maidens' hearts and those of bold men as well; he robs the young men and causes old men to make fools of themselves. Of Cupid, Tibullus exclaims, a miseri, quos hic graviter deus urget! "Ah, wretched they upon whom our god bears hardly . . . " (II, i, 79).

The Alexandrians had described Cupid as being armed with a bow and arrows and with fire;[69] Tibullus does the same:

> . . . sed pone sagittas
> et procul ardentes hinc precor abde faces.
>
> But, prithee, lay aside thy arrows, and far from us put away thy burning torch.
>
> (II, i, 81- 82)

> . . . Amor,
> et seu quid merui seu nil peccavimus, urit.
> uror, io . . . .
>
> . . . Love . . . burns me whether I have deserved to suffer or have done no wrong. Ah, how I burn!
>
> (II, iv, 4- 6)

[69] Asclepiades, Greek Anthol. V, 189.
Poseidippus, Greek Anthol. V, 194.

. . . sed postquam sumpsit sibi tela Cupido,
heu heu quam multis ars dedit ista malum!

. . . but since Cupid took to carrying arrows, how many,
ah me, has that honest craft made smart!
(II, v, 107- 8)

acer Amor, fractas utinam tua tela sagittas,
si licet, extinctas aspiciamque faces!

Fierce Love, oh, if this could be, I would see thine arms
destroyed, the arrows broken and the torches quenched.
(II, vi, 15- 16)

Tibullus intermingled the conventional expressions of love-elegy, as they applied to Delia and, subsequently, to Nemesis, with his fondness for the countryside, his friendship for Messalla, and his reverence for religion. At the prompting of Messalla, he introduced patriotic passages into his elegies, and, because of his natural interest in antiquity, he made this subject a part of the elegy as well. In addition, he polished and refined the verse form, raising it to new heights. At his death, which was toward the close of 19 B.C.,[70] Domitius Marsus was prompted to declare that elegy had lost its master.[71]

[70] Tibullus' death occurred at very nearly the same time as that of Vergil. (Hammer in OCD, s.v., "Tibullus," p. 907.)

[71] Prefixed to the Vita (of Tibullus) is the following epigram, attributed, though not with certainty, to Domitius Marsus:

Te quoque Vergilio comitem non aequa, Tibulle,
Mors iuvenem campos misit ad Elisios,
Ne foret, aut elegis molles qui fleret amores
Aut caneret forti regia bella pede.

# CHAPTER V

## PROPERTIUS

Although Sextus Propertius (c. 50- c. 15 B. C.)[72] was a contemporary of Tibullus, the poetry which he presents is far more Alexandrian in both its style and temper. The location of Propertius' birthplace is revealed in the concluding elegy of his first book:

> proxima supposito contingens Vmbria campo
> me genuit terris fertilis uberibus.

> . . . know then that where Umbria, rich in fertile lands, joins the wide plain that lies below, there was I born.[73]

Like Vergil, Horace, and, as mentioned above, probably Tibullus, Propertius saw his parental estate distributed among the victors of Philippi in 41 B.C.[74] Having lost his father at an early age, he was looked after by his mother who sent him to Rome to study law. Turning his back on a legal career, however, Propertius began to devote his time to the writing of poetry.

[72] See the following on Propertius' life:
Butler in OCD, s.v., "Propertius," p. 737.
Carter, pp. xxx- xxxvi. Sellar, pp. 262- 294. Luck, pp. 111- 113.

[73] Propertius, Sextus, The Elegies, trans. H. E. Butler (Loeb Classical Library, London, 1912), book IV, selection i, lines 62- 64. All subsequent excerpts and translations from Propertius are from the above, referred to within the work by book, selection, and line.

[74] Butler in OCD, s.v., "Propertius," p. 737.

Propertius professes to be a follower of the Alexandrian poets, Callimachus and Philetas. On one occasion he entreats,

> mi folia ex hedera porrige, Bacche, tua,
> ut nostris tumefacta superbiat Vmbria libris,
> Vmbria Romani patria Callimachi!

> To me, O Bacchus, give of thine ivy's leaves, that my books may make Umbria swell with pride, Umbria the home of Rome's Callimachus!

(II, i, 62-64)

In the introduction to the third book he makes this invocation:

> Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philetae,
> in vestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus.

> Shade of Callimachus and sacred rites of Philetas, suffer me, I pray, to enter your grove.

(III, i, 1- 2)

In certain respects his claims are justified, as shown, for example, in his frequent use of obscure[75] myths, as the Alexandrians before him had done.

Like Callimachus and unlike his contemporary, Tibullus, Propertius twists familiar words and expressions in such a way as to give them an element of surprise and,

[75] The subject matter of recently uncovered wall paintings in Pompeii raises doubt as to whether the myths in question were as unfamiliar to those for whom they were written as has commonly been believed. Many of the mythological subjects are also found in other classical writings such as Ovid's Metamorphoses.

often, an entirely new meaning. In like manner he shows the product of his imagination in the novel use of imagery.

Whereas Tibullus' and Ovid's hexameters form the strong, rising line in each distich, while the pentameters may be compared to a softer echo or, perhaps, a meditative pause, the importance of the two lines of Propertius' couplets is often reversed, with greater emphasis placed on the second line, the pentameter. Such is the versatility of elegy, and such is Propertius' style that the reader may well expect variations of this sort. Furthermore, where Tibullus and Ovid provide a continuous flow of ideas, each complete within its own couplet, Propertius quite often allows the sense to run on into the third line, or even further, without any perceptible pause.

Propertius frequently employs the "pathetic fallacy," a device already current in, for example, Vergil (Ecl. X) and Tibullus (e. g. II, iii, 61- 62). In one short passage he addresses the trees (I, xviii, 20), a fountain (I, xviii, 27), and the birds (I, xviii, 30). In two poems the speaker is the ghost of someone who has passed from this life, in the first instance, Cynthia (IV, vii, 13ff), in the second, Cornelia (IV, xi, 1ff). Pursuing this search for the unusual, moreover, like his predecessor, Catullus, he does not omit an opportunity to record

the discourse of a house door (I, xvi, 1ff). It is quite possible that this device had already been used by the Alexandrian elegists, but it is interesting here as proof that Propertius was thoroughly acquainted with the poetry of Catullus.

Tibullus loved the country and used it as a setting for many of his elegies; Propertius may be regarded as an urban poet. As a result, city life is predominant in his verse and especially in his erotic elegy.

In the field of love- elegy ~~Tibullus~~ Propertius can be ranked as an accomplished artist. Thus his first and second books are dominated by one theme, the poet's overwhelming passion for an intelligent, charming, and beautiful woman, Hostia, or Cynthia as she is called in the poems.[76] Like Catullus' Lesbia, Cynthia is able to lift her lover to heights of bliss, as shown by Propertius exclamation of joy:

> O me felicem! o nox mihi candida! et o tu
> lectule deliciis facte beate meis!

> How happy is my lot! O night that was not dark for me!
> and thou beloved couch blessed by my delight!
> (II, xv, 1- 2)

and like Catullus' Lesbia, she is able to make her lover miserable:

> quid tibi vis, insane? meos sentire furores?
> infelix, properas ultima nosse mala,
> et miser ignotos vestigia ferre per ignes,
> et bibere e tota toxica Thessalia.

[76] Apul. Apol. X.

> What wouldst thou, madman? Wouldst thou suffer frenzies such as mine? Poor wretch, thou hastest to acquaint thyself with the worst of ills, to tread on hidden fire to thy sorrow and drink all Thessaly's store of poison.
>
> (I, v, 3- 6)

It should be noted, however, that although Propertius shows indications of sincere love in his poetry,[76a] there are also times when passion prompts him to act selfishly. In one instance he declares to Cynthia,

> quod si pertendens animo vestita cubaris,
> scissa veste meas experiere manus.

> But if thou hardenest thine heart and wilt lie clothed, thou shall have thy raiment rent and feel the violence of my hands.
>
> (II, xv, 17- 18)

On an occasion such as this, one cannot ~~help~~ but feel that Propertius is thinking solely of his own pleasure.

In any event, whatever love Propertius and Cynthia may have shared, it was not long before their happiness showed signs of fading. In the eleventh poem of the first book, she has left him for a time to stay at Baiae. A more serious rift is indicated in the seventeenth and eighteenth poems, and in the second book Propertius exclaims,

> Hoc verum est, tota te ferri, Cynthia, Roma,
> et non ignota vivere nequitia?
> haec merui sperare?

> Is this true, Cynthia, that thou livest in open wantonness? Did I deserve to look for this?
>
> (II, v, 1- 3)

[76a] e. g. II, xxx.

By the end of the third book, Propertius' disillusionment is complete, and there is no trace of love in his scornful words of indignation:

> at te celatis aetas gravis urgeat annis,
> et veniat formae ruga sinistra tuae!
> vellere tum cupias albos a stirpe capillos,
> a! speculo rugas increpitante tibi,
> exclusa inque vicem fastus patiare superbos,
> et quae fecisti facta queraris anus!
> has tibi fatales cecinit mea pagina diras:
> eventum formae disce timere tuae!

> But thee may weary age bow down with the years thou hast concealed, and may ill- favoured wrinkles come to mar thy beauty! Then mayest thou desire to tear out thy white hairs by the root, when the mirror mocks thee with thy wrinkles; mayest thou in thy turn be shut out from bliss and endure another's haughty scorn! Turned into an ancient crone, mayst thou lament what thou hast done! Such curses fraught with doom are the burden of my song for thee: learn to dread the end that awaits thy beauty!
>
> (III, xxv, 11- 18)

Thus, having endured experiences and emotional distresses like those of other elegiac poets, such as Catullus, Gallus, and Tibullus, Propertius is also able to put depth of feeling into the conventional themes of love-elegy. In the role of the lover locked out, he cries to the door of his mistress house,

> Ianua vel domina penitus crudelior ipsa,
> quid mihi iam duris clausa taces foribus?
> nullane finis erit nostro concessa dolori,
> turpis et in tepido limine somnus erit?

> Door yet more deeply cruel than even my mistress' heart, why are thy grim portals ever closed and mute for me? Wilt thou never grant an ending to my woes? And must a doleful sleep be mine on thy chill threshold?
>
> (I, xvi, 17- 18, 21- 22)

and when he is bringing his five years of bondage to Cynthia to an end he speaks these words,

> limina iam nostris valeant lacrimantia verbis,
> nec tamen irata ianua fracta manu.

> Farewell the threshold still weeping with my plaint, farewell that door ne'er broken by my hands for all its cruelty!

(III, xxv, 9 - 10)

Like Tibullus, Propertius adopts the imagery of the Alexandrians to describe love. He praises the perceptiveness of the person who first depicted Cupid as a winged boy with a quiver and arrows (II,xii).

Propertius also pursues the theme that every lover is a soldier. In one instance he asserts,

> non ego sum laudi, non natus idoneus armis:
> hanc /Amoris/ me militiam fata subire volunt.

> Nature has not fitted me for glory or for arms; Love's is the only warfare for which the Fates design me,

(I, vi, 29 - 30)

and he later repeats this idea:

> sat mihi cum domina proelia dura mea.

> . . . enough for me the hard warfare I wage with my mistress.

(III, v, 2)

Regular soldiers recount the manner in which they received their wounds, Propertius asserts,

> nos contra angusto versantes proelia lecto

> while we for our part tell of lovers' wars upon a narrow couch!

(II, i, 45)

In this latter form of warfare he boasts of his prowess:

> quod si vera meae comitarem castra puellae,
> non mihi sat magnus Castoris iret equus.
> hinc etenim tantum meruit mea gloria nomen,
> gloria ad hibernos lata Borysthenidas.

> But if I were to follow my mistress' camp (the one true camp for me!), not mighty enough for me were Castor's war-horse, 'Twas in Love's warfare that my fame won such renown, fame that has travelled to the wintry Borysthenidae.

(II, vii, 15 - 18)

Like other elegists, Propertius exhorts his mistress not to waste away her fleeting youth apart from his embraces:

> quare, dum licet, inter nos laetemur amantes:
> non satis est ullo tempore longus amor.

> Wherefore, while yet may be, let us love and be merry together. Eternity itself is all to brief for love.

(I, xix, 25 - 26)

The same theme appears again, expressed in Propertius' forceful and arresting manner of speech:

> necdum inclinatae prohibent te ludere mammae:
> viderit haec, si quam iam peperisse pudet.
> dum nos fata sinunt, aculos satiemus amore:
> nox tibi longa venit, nec reditura dies

> Not yet do drooping breasts forbid thee to make merry; that be her care that hath borne a child and counts it shame. While the Fates grant it, let us glut our eyes with love: the long night hasteneth on for thee that knows no dawning.

(II, xv, 21 - 24)

Propertius accepts the conventional tradition that the gods watch over lovers:

> nec tamen est quisquam, sacros qui laedat amantes:
> Scironis media sic licet ire via.

Yet there is none would hurt a lover: lovers are sacred: lovers might travel Sciron's road unscathed;

(III, xvi, 11 - 12)

however, since Cynthia deceives him more than he deceives her, he is not prepared to insist, as the other elegists do, that the gods wink at the perjuries of lovers:

non semper placidus periuros ridet amantes
  Iuppiter et surda neglegit aure preces.
vidistis toto sonitus percurrere caelo,
  fulminaque aetheria desiluisse domo:
periuras tunc ille solet punire puellas.

Not always does Jove calmly laugh at lovers' perjuries and turn a deaf ear to prayer. Thou hast perceived the thunderclap run through all the sky, and the levin bolt leap from its airy home. 'Tis then that Jove is wont to punish faithless girls.

(II, xvi, 47 - 50, 53)

Whereas Tibullus grieved because Delia preferred a wealthy suitor to a poet, Propertius is able to rejoice that his verses are bringing him Cynthia's favours.

hanc ego non auro, non Indis flectere conchis,
  sed potui blandi carminis obsequio.

Not by gold nor by the pearls of India did I prevail to win her, but by the homage of beguiling song.

(I, viiiA, 39 - 40)

At this point he feels that the best things in life are free:

nam quis divitiis adverso gaudet Amore?

For who may have joy of wealth if Love be not kind?

(I, xiv, 15)

A little later, however, he begins to feel that the best things in life are free--to those who have money:

Cynthia non sequitur fasces nec curat honores,
  semper amatorum ponderat una sinus.
ergo muneribus quivis mercatur amorem?
  Iuppiter, indigna merce puella perit.

Cynthia follows not the rods of office, cares naught for honours; her lovers' purse she ever weighs as none other can. So then shall any stranger purchase her love with gifts? Jove! 'tis an unworthy thing that such traffic should have power to corrupt the heart of woman.

(II, xvi, 11 - 12, 15 - 16)

Aside from his personal complaint, Propertius preaches against the corrupting power of money in more general terms, reproaching the avaricious:

matrona incedit census induta nepotum
  et spolia opprolrii nostra per ora trahit.

Matrons go forth arrayed in spendthrifts' fortunes and flaunt the spoils of infamy before our eyes,

(III, xiii, 11 - 12)

and again he speaks out in denunciation of those who value wealth above true love:

an quisquam in tanto stuprorum examine quaerit
  "Cur haec tam dives? quis dedit? unde dedit?"
o nimium nostro felicem tempore Romam,
  si contra mores una puella facit!

After a host of sinners such as these does any ask: 'Why is she so rich?' 'Who gave? Whence came his gifts?' O Rome in these our days, thy happiness is full to overflowing, if one girl act not as her fellows do.'

(II, xxxii, 41 - 44)

At this point one ought to consider the extent to which the theme of jealousy is a true expression of the feelings of the elegists, and to what extent it is merely a conventional expression of a regular motif. The answer seems to be that Catullus felt a fierce jealousy of

Lesbia. Tibullus and Propertius appear to have had similar feelings for their mistresses, but to a much lesser extent. At the other extreme, it is quite likely that the expressions of jealousy in Ovid's elegies are nothing more than literary convention.

In the case of Propertius, the disgust which he holds for avarice would appear to be sincere. Thus, many other passages show his desire to point out to his fellow citizens the evil of greed:

> at nune desertis cessant sacraria lucis:
> aurum omnes victa iam pietate colunt.
> auro pulsa fides, auro venalia iura,
> aurum lex sequitur, mox sine lege pudor.

> But now the shrines lie neglected in deserted groves: piety is vanquished and all men worship gold. Gold has banished faith, gold has made judgement to be bought and sold, gold rules the law, and, law once gone, rules chastity as well,

(III, xiii, 47 - 50)

and, finally, in lines that show keen insight, Propertius--comparing himself to Cassandra, the prophetess who, unheeded, foretold Troy's destruction--issues this prophetic warning:

> proloquar:--atque utinam patriae sim verus haruspex!--
> frangitur ipsa suis Roma superba bonis.
> certa loquor, sed nulla fides . . . .

> I will speak out; and may my country find me a true seer! Rome is being shattered by her own prosperity. I speak sure truth but none believe me . . . .

(III, xiii, 59 - 61)

After the publication of his first book, Propertius had been brought under the patronage of Maecenas,[77] becoming a member of the

[77] This claim is based on the fact that Propertius addresses Maecenas for the first time in II, i, 17.

same literary circle as Vergil, Horace, Varius, Melissus, Domitius Marsus, and Plotius Tucca.[78] Maecenas was a clever, infinitely tactful, and brilliantly evocative man who, by his conciliatory manner, won these men to the support of Augustus, urging them to write in praise of Rome and the policies of the emperor.

Propertius first addresses Maecenas in the first poem of his second book and later he protests at the wide range and nature of themes on which he is called to write:

> Maecenas, eques Etrusco de sanguine regum,
> intra fortunam qui cupis esse tuam,
> quid me scribendi tam vastum mittis in aequor?
> non sunt apta meae grandia vela rati.

> Maecenas, knight sprung from the blood of Tuscan kings, that wouldst fain abide within my fortune's scope, why dost thou launch me on so wide a sea of song? Such spreading canvas suits not a bark like mine.

(III, ix, 1 - 4)

Despite the fact that Propertius does protest, however, his poetry shows a considerable broadening of scope as a result of his entry into Maecenas' circle of poets. From this point, his elegies go beyond the confines of love-elegy proper to embrace a number of other themes. Thus, under his patron's influence, Propertius glorifies Rome:

> optima nutricum nostris lupa Martia rebus,
> qualia creverunt moenia lacte tuo!

> O wolf of Mars, thou best of nurses for our state, what walls have sprung from thy milk!

(IV, i, 55 - 56)

All the marvels of the world, he declares (III, xxii, 7 ff), shall yield

78 See the unpubl. diss. (Chicago, 1922) by William George Hardy, "Greek Epigrammatists at Rome in the First Century B.C.," pp. 22-23.

to this pulcherrima sedes, "fairest home." Rome, he proclaims, is

septem urbs alta iugis, toto quae praesidet orbi.

The city high-throned on the seven hills, the queen of all the world.

(III, xi, 57)

Propertius is more than grateful that Rome, ravaged by warfare, is now at peace, and therefore he is able to sing with sincerity the praises of Augustus:

Caesaris in nomen ducuntur carmina: Caesar
dum canitur, quaeso, Iuppiter ipse vaces.

My songs are spun for the glory of Caesar: while Caesar is the theme of song, do thou, Jupiter, even thou, rest from thy labours and give ear.

(IV, vi, 13 - 14)

Elsewhere he asserts,

bellaque resque tui memoraren Caesaris, et tu /Maecenas/
Caesare sub magno cura secunda fores.

But I would tell of the wars and the deeds of thy master Caesar, and next after mighty Caesar my thoughts should turn on thee /Maecenas/.

(II, i, 25 - 26)

Propertius expresses the wish that Rome may long enjoy Augustus' rule:

cape, Roma, triumphum
et longum Augusto salva precare diem!

Rome, take thy triumph and, saved from doom, implore long life for Augustus.

(III, xi, 49 - 50)

Propertius, in accordance with a growing custom, even speaks

of his emperor as if he were a god. He makes reference to Iovi nostro, "our Jove" (III, xi, 41), mundi servator, "savior of the world" (IV, vi, 37), and gives these words to the shade of Cornelia:

> defensa et gemitu Caesaris ossa mea.
> ille sua nata dignam vixisse sororem
> increpat, et lacrimas vidimus ire deo.

> . . . mine ashes are championed by the grief of Caesar. Moaning he cries that in me his daughter had a worthy sister, and we saw that even a god may weep.
>
> (IV, xi, 58- 60)

Like Tibullus, Propertius is a poet of peace:

> Pacis Amor deus est, pacem veneramur amantes:
> sat mihi cum domina proelia dura mea.

> Love is a god of peace: we lovers worship peace: enough for me the hard warfare I wage with my mistress.
>
> (III, V, 1-2)

Giving his appeal for peace a somewhat different twist to that of the modern moralists, he exclaims,

> qualem si cuncti cuperent decurrere vitam
> et pressi multo membra iacere mero,
> non ferrum crudele neque esset bellica navis,
> nec nostra Actiacum verteret ossa mare.

> Ah! if all men desired to pass their life as I, and lie with limbs weighed down by deep draughts of wine, nor cruel steel would there be nor ships of war, nor would our bones be tossed in the deep of Actium.
>
> (II, xv, 41- 44)

Especially in his later writing Propertius shows the religious side of his nature:

> Sacra diesque canam et cognomina prisca locorum:

> Of holy rites and their days will I sing, and of the ancient names of places.
>
> (IV, i, 69)

The opening lines of one poem, in which the poet's feeling of reverence

is shown, are not altogether unlike the opening lines of Tibullus' "Ambarvalia":

> Sacra facit vates: sint ora faventia sacris,
> et cadet ante meos icta invenca focos.

> The priest doth sacrifice; be silent all that his sacrifice may prosper . . . .

(IV, vi, 1)

Propertius shows a strong preference for the native Italian gods, such as the Tuscan deity, Vertumnus, who has dwelt in Italy since before the time of Numa (IV, ii, 10, 60). Like Tibullus, he is sceptical of imported gods. In fact, Propertius strongly denounces Io, as a result of whose rites his mistress is practising celibacy:

> atque utinam pereant, Nilo quae sacra tepente
> misit natronis Inachis Ausoniis!

> And a curse upon the rites which the daughter of Inachus hath sent from the warm Nile to the matrons of Italy!

(II, xxxiii, 3- 4)

There is some uncertainty in Propertius' eschatological views. Looking ahead to his existence after death, he declares, <u>illic "quidquid ero," semper tua dicar imago</u>: "There, "whatsoe'er I be," as Cynthia's lover shall my shade be known . . ." (I, xix, 11). Propertius does feel certain, however, that this life is not the end of everything:

> Svnt aliquid Manes: letum non omnia finit,
> luridaque evictos effugit umbra rogos.

> The Shades are no fable: death is not the end of all, and the pale ghost escapes the vanquished pyre.

(IV, vii, 1 - 2)

In one instance he shows that the twentieth century saying, "You can't

take it with you," does not express an original idea:

> haud ullas portabis opes Acherontis ad undas:
> nudus ad infernas, stulte, vehere rates.

> Yet no wealth shall thou carry to the waves of Acheron: naked, thou fool, thou shalt be borne to the ship of Hell.

(III, v, 13 - 14)

In a most curious passage, and one that only the mind of Propertius could originate, the poet, wishing to express the idea that people in their afterlife know and love each other as they had done on earth, and feeling that this might not be possible for mere shades, writes, attributing the words to Cynthia's ghost,

> . . . mox sola tenebo:
> mecum eris, et mixtis ossa teram."

> Soon shalt thou be mine alone; with me shalt thou be, and I will grind bone with mingled bone.

(IV, vii, 93 - 94)

Whatever his doubts about the exact form of life after death, however, he is confident of a just judgement:

> nam gemina est sedes turpem sortita per amnem,
> turbaque diversa remigat omnis aqua:
> una Clytaemestrae stuprum vehit, altera Cressae
> portat mentitae lignea monstra bovis:
> ecce coronato pars altera rapta phaselo,
> mulcet ubi Elysias aura beata rosas,
> qua numerosa fides, quaque aera rotunda Cybelles
> mitratisque sonant Lydia plectra choris.

> Two mansions are there allotted beside the foul stream of Hell, and all the dead must ply the oar this way or that. One bark bears the adultery of Clytemestra, another the monstrous timber of the feigned Cretan cow; but lo! yet others are swept away in wreathed boat, where blessed airs fan the roses of Elysium, where the harp makes music and the round cymbals of Cybelle, and the turbaned dancers strike the Lydian lyre.

(IV, vii, 55 - 62)

Therefore, it is not eternal torment which Propertius fears. He is afraid, rather that he may die unloved by his mistress:

> Non ego nunc tristes vereor, mea Cynthia, Manes,
> nec moror extremo debita fata rogo;
> sed ne forte tuo careat mihi funus amore,
> hic timor est ipsis durior exsequiis.

> No more now, my Cynthia, fear I the sad world of death; I care not for the doom that at the last must feed the fires of funeral; this fear alone is bitterer than death itself, that I should go down to the grave unloved by thee.

(I, xix, 1 - 4)

Elsewhere he takes pleasure in the thought of Cynthia's tears and mourning:

> an poteris siccis mea fata reposcere ocellis
> ossaque nulla tuo nostra tenere sinu?

> Wilt have the heart dry-eyed to demand my death and ne'er to hold mine ashes to thy bosom?

(I, xvii, 11 - 12)

Propertius' preoccupation with the thought of his own death becomes excessive, as in the thirteenth poem in the second book, and there is always a note of selfishness present. He does not feel regret for the sorrow he will cause his beloved but takes delight in imagining her distress. The following lines present a prime example:

> quam vereor, ne te contempto, Cynthia, busto
> abstrahat ei! nostro pulvere iniquus Amor,
> cogat et invitam lacrimas siccare cadentes!

> Yet Cynthia, I have a fear that thou mayst spurn my tomb, and some cruel passion part thee from my dust, and force thee, though loth to dry thy falling tears.

(I, xix, 21 - 23)

In lines like these, the poet's love is not of Cynthia, but solely of himself.

When Propertius turns from his own melancholy thoughts to consider the sorrows of others, the nobler side of his nature comes to light. Pursuing one of the earliest, and possibly the first theme to be set in the elegiac meter, he mourns the untimely death of Marcellus, nephew of Augustus, who died at Baiae in the year 23 B.C. In lines designed to bring honor to the memory of the young man and comfort to his parents, the poet writes,

> at tibi, nauta, pias hominum qui traicis umbras,
> hoc animae portent corpus inane suae:
> qua Siculae victor telluris Claudius et qua
> Caesar, ab humana cessit in astra via.

> But to thee, O ferryman of pious souls, let them bear this body void of its spirit; his soul hath soared starward far from the paths of men by the road that Claudius and Caesar trod.

(III, xviii, 31 - 34)

In a poem that one cannot help comparing with John Milton's "Lycidas," Propertius mourns for Paetus. In both poems a young man has met an untimely death, with all the hopes and aspirations of life unfulfilled, and in both poems the loss of life is caused by shipwreck. Propertius, like Milton, disturbed that the victim should be a righteous man, attributes these words to the drowning youth:

> "Di maris Aegaei quos sunt penes aequora, venti,
> et quaecumque meum degravat unda caput,
> quo rapitis miseros primae lanuginis annos?
> attulimus nocuas in freta vestra manus?
> a miser . . . !"

> Ye gods of the Aegean that have power over the waters, ye winds and every wave that weighs down my head, whither snatch ye the hapless years of my first bloom? Was there guilt on the hands that I brought to your seas? Ah! woe is me!

(III, vii, 57 - 61)

The poet is not insensitive to the doubled grief of a mother who cannot give her departed son a proper burial: as the waves overwhelm the drowning lad he gasps forth these last words:

> at saltem Italiae regionibus evehat aestus:
> hoc de me sat erit si modo matris erit.

> Yet at least may the tide cast me up on Italian shores: little though there be left of me, 'twill suffice if but it reach my mother.

(III, vii, 63 - 64)

The greatest of Propertius' poems of mourning and, indeed, the greatest of all of his elegies is the final selection of the fourth book. In lines distinguished by dignity and nobility, the shade of Cornelia, half-sister of Augustus' daughter Julia, addresses her bereaved husband Paullus. The Roman matron speaks with just pride of her noble ancestors and declares that she has done nothing to dishonor the family name:

> . . . neque ulla
> labe mea nostros erubuisse focos.

> my hearth ne'er blushed for sin of mine.

(IV, xi, 41 - 42)

Her pleasure has been to care for her husband, her daughter, and her two sons, Lepidus and Paullus.

In lines in which Propertius mingles dignity and pathos, deep feeling and restraint, the shade of Cornelia places the care of her children in their father's hands:

> nunc tibi commendo communia pignora natos:
> haec cura et cineri spirat inusta meo.
> oscula cum dederis tua flentibus, adice matris:
> tota domus coepit nunc onus esse tuum.
> et si quid doliturus eris, sine testibus illis!
> cum venient, siccis oscula falle genis!

> And now to thee, Paullus, I commend our children, the common pledges of our love: this care yet lives deep-burned even into mine ashes. When thou dost kiss their tears away, add thereto their mother's kisses; henceforth the whole house must be thy burden. And if thou must weep at all, weep when they are not by; when they come to thee, cheat their kisses with tearless eye.
>
> (IV, xi, 73 - 74, 77 - 80)

Cornelia's first thought is not for her own but for her bereaved husband's welfare. If it is his wish to remarry, she will not complain, and, in view of this possibility, she exhorts the children's kindness toward their stepmother:

> nec matrem laudate nimis: collata priori
> vertet in offensas libera verba suas.

> Nor praise your mother overmuch: she will be angered if in unguarded speech ye compare her with her that was.
>
> (IV, xi, 89 - 90)

Finally, if Paullus is content to live with the memory of her, Cornelia entrusts her husband's care to her children:

> discite venturam iam nunc sentire senectam,
> caelibis ad curas nec vacet ulla via.
> quod mihi detractum est, veteros accedat ad annos:
> prole mea Paullum sic iuvet esse senem.

> . . . learn even now to note how old age steals upon him, and leave no path for grief to assail his widowed heart. May the years that were snatched from me be added to your years; thus may my children's presence sweeten old age for Paullus.
>
> (IV, xi, 93 - 96)

The noble and deeply moving lines of this poem show Propertius' genius at its height. The use of mythology is employed with discretion, the striving for unusual effects is restrained, the outbursts of passion are held in check, all excesses are removed. In this poem, above the rest, Propertius achieves an ideal proportioning of

the material employed, and the thought flows smoothly from line to line. Here the finest technical skill and the most worthy sentiments of the poet are brought together.

Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius had written elegies on a number of subjects. From this time forward, however, in the hands of Ovid, the last of the great Augustan elegists, the elegy was to be used for little but love.

# CHAPTER VI

## OVID

The last of the great Augustan elegists, Publius Ovidius Naso,[79] was born in 43 B.C., the year in which Cicero died,[80] and, like Cicero, he provided a wealth of autobiographical information. His birthplace was Sulmo, a town situated in the Paelignian territory of central Italy. The son of well-to-do parents of equestrian rank, Ovid was sent to Rome to study rhetoric and law. His chief interest, however, was in writing verse. After holding certain minor offices he abandoned his public career entirely, much to the displeasure of his father who pointed out, in a practical way, that even Homer left no wealth.[81]

An important part of Ovid's education was a foreign tour which he took in the company of Macer,[82] to Athens, Asia Minor, and Sicily.[83] Undoubtedly he came in contact with many influences that stimulated his literary career, and it is quite possible that it was in the course of this journey that he acquired much of the material that was to make the Metamorphoses (among other things) "a text of classical mythology."

[79] See the following on Ovid's life:
Owen in OCD, s.v., "Ovid, 1 - 4," pp. 630 - 1. Carter, pp. xxxix - xliii. Rose, pp. 323 - 326. Luck, pp. 141 - 144.

[80] Richards in OCD, s.v., "Cicero (1) 1," p. 188.

[81] Ovid, Tristia, IV, x, 21 - 22.

[82] Not to be confused with Aemilius Macer, the friend of Vergil.

[83] Owen in OCD, s.v., "Ovid (1) 1," p. 630.

After two unsuccessful marriages, the first of which was arranged by his father, Ovid married Fabia, a widow with a daughter.[84] This marriage was successful, and in due course a daughter of his own was born. Fabia, who was a member of the powerful Fabian family and a friend of Augustus' wife, greatly increased the social standing of her husband, whose brilliant wit had already gained him entrance to the circle of important people in Rome.

Suddenly, in 8 A.D., at the height of his brilliant career, Ovid was banished by the decree of Augustus to Tomis (not Tomi, cf. MSS. Tr. III, ix, 33; Pont. IV, xiv, 59), a rugged, semi-civilized outpost on the western coast of the Black Sea.[85] The reasons, as the poet himself affirms, were carmen et error,[86] "a poem and a mistake." The carmen is usually thought to have been the Ars Amatoria; however, it must be remembered that this poem had been published nearly ten years earlier. Furthermore, it is this author's opinion that Augustus would have personally supervised the destruction of all copies of a poem that caused him such displeasure, and the offensive lines may not have been handed down to posterity.

As for the error, there is even more room for conjecture.[86a] Authorities such as Carter and Grant assume that the real cause of the banishment was connected with a court scandal involving Augustus' grand-

[84] Ibid., p. 630. Guinagh & Dorjahn, p. 529.

[85] Owen in OCD, s.v., "Ovid (1) 3," p. 631.

[86] Ovid, Tristia, II, 207.

[86a] A recent article by W. H. Alexander, "The Culpa of Ovid," CJ, vol. 53, no. 7 (1958), pp. 319- 325 attempts to settle this question.

daughter Julia.[87] Guinagh and Dorjahn, on the other hand, point out quite plausibly that the fact that Augustus' successor, Tiberius, would not hear of the exile's return supports the opinion that the error was political rather than personal.[88] In any event, Ovid dragged out his remaining years, alone among uncivilized people who could not appreciate his art, ever hoping to be recalled to Rome, the city he loved. His longings, however, were in vain; he died on the rugged coast of the Black Sea in 17 A.D.

With the exception of the Metamorphoses, most of Ovid's works were written in the elegiac couplet. He used the elegiac meter in his didactic poem, the Ars Amatoria; in the Heroides, love-letters of famous heroines; and in the Fasti, his most serious production.

In all of these poems Ovid exhibited a faultless precision of meter, giving a final polish to the elegiac couplet. For the purposes of this study, however, while noting that Ovid, like Callimachus and other predecessors, employed the elegiac couplet for a variety of subject-matter, the following discussion will be limited to his love-elegies, the Amores. The reason for this limitation is that it is here that the development of the Latin love-elegy is seen, and it is the Amores alone which may be fairly compared to the elegies of Tibullus and Propertius.

The Amores, the first of Ovid's works to be published, are the product of the poet's youth. The gay and carefree spirit of the author is ever present in his light-hearted lines. Vivacity and sparkling wit

[87] Carter, p. xl. Grant, p. 227.

[88] Guinagh & Dorjahn, pp. 529 - 530.

abound. The reader is swept along, spellbound by the clever use of repetition, epigramatic antithesis, sound effects, and other stylistic devices. The following lines provide an example:

> non peccat, quaecumque potest peccasse negare,
> solaque famosam culpa professa facit.
> quis furor est, quae nocte latent, in luce fateri,
> et quae clam facias facta referre palam?

> She does not sin who can deny her sin, and 'tis only the fault avowed that brings dishonour. What madness is this, to confess in the light of day the hidden things of night, and spread abroad your secret deeds?[89]

Note, too, the alliteration which has been worked into these lines:

```
A   B       C        C   B       B        A
non peccat quaecumque potest peccasse negare,
                 D                 D     D
. . . famosam . . . professa facit.

C    D              C           E              E    D
quis furor . . . , quae . . . latent, . . . luce fateri,

          C          D      D       D
. . . quae . . . facias facta referre . . . ?
```

The above analysis, moreover, in the interest of simplicity, does not include all of the middle and end alliteration which is also present. Certainly, this is the work of a man who is an absolute master of style.

As an artist adds richness to a painting with bright touches of color, Ovid enhances his elegies with the imagery that results from the skilful use of well-chosen similes. The following lines illustrate this feature:

[89] Naso, Publius Ovidius, Amores, trans. Grant Showerman (Loeb Classical Library, London, 1914), book III, selection xiv, lines 5 - 8. All subsequent excerpts and translations from Ovid are from the above, referred to within the work by book, selection and line.

exanimisartus et membra trementia vidi--
ut cum populeas ventilat aura comas,
ut leni Zephyro gracilis vilratur harundo,
summave cum tepido stringitur unda Noto;
suspensaeque diu lacrimae fluxere per ora,
qualiter abiecta de nive manat aqua.

I saw her limbs all nerveless and her frame a-tremble-like the leaves of the poplar shaken by the breeze, like the slender reed set quivering by gentle Zephyr, or the surface of the wave when ruffled by the warm South-wind; and the tears, long hanging in her eyes, came flowing o'er her cheeks even as water distils from snow that is cast aside.

(I, vii, 53 - 58)

Like Propertius, Ovid frequently gives human attributes to lower organisms and inanimate objects. Of the tree and the vine he states:

Ulmus amat vitem, vitis non deserit ulmum;

The elm loves the vine, the vine abandons not the elm.

(II, xvi, 41)

In one instance, he addresses the hills and valleys as if they could hear him and grant his request:

at vos, qua veniet, tumidi, subsidite, montes,
et faciles curvis vallibus este, viae!

And O, wherever she passes, sink down, ye hills, and be easy in the winding vales, ye ways!

(II, xvi, 51 - 52)

In another case, he scolds a swollen stream that is preventing him from visiting his mistress (III, vii), and as he stands at its bank, he tells it of all of the rivers which have themselves been kindled with the fire of passion.

The catologue of rivers in love also serves to illustrate the

fondness of Ovid, like Propertius, and like the Alexandrians before him, for tales from mythology. With respect to the myths, too, it should be noted that, like his Alexandrian predecessor Callimachus, Ovid tends " . . . to make light of the sublimity of the theme and to reduce each myth to the scale of a 'genre' picture . . . . "[90]

Ovid is usually regarded as a poet of the city, but in his elegies, as well as the later writings, his appreciation of the beauty of nature is often apparent. On more than one occasion, he employs the opening lines of the poem to describe a lovely woodland setting which is to form a background for the lines which follow. One such example is found in the first selection of the third book:

> Stat vetus et multos incaedua silva per annos;
> credibile est illi numen inesse loco.
> fons sacer in medio speluncaque pumice pendens,
> et latere ex omni dulce queruntur aves.
> Hic ego dum spatior . . . .

> Ancient, and spared by the axe through many years, there stands a grove; you could believe a deity indwelt the place. A sacred spring is in its midst, and a cave with overhanging rock, and from every side comes the sweet complaint of birds.
> "Whilst I was strolling here . . . ."

(III, i, 1 - 5)

Writing in a period further removed from the wars that had plagued Rome, and writing in a period when the average citizen, satisfied with Augustus' stabilizing effect on government, had withdrawn from politics, Ovid makes less mention of these matters than Catullus, Tibullus, or Propertius. His sentiments, however, though less often expressed, are not at variance:

[90] See above, reference 34, pp. 9 - 10.

plaude tuo Marti, miles! nos odimus arma;
pax iuvat et media pace repertus amor.

Applaud thy Mars, O soldier! Arms I detest; peace is my delight, and love that is found in the midst of peace.

(III, ii, 49 - 50)

Ovid is not a deeply religious poet. The awareness of some power greater than himself, some celestial influence to take an interest in him, is not apparent as, for example, in the case of Tibullus. As much as anything else, it is the pomp of religious ceremony that appeals to Ovid:

ore favent populi tunc cum venit aurea pompa,
ipsa sacerdotes subsequiturque suas.

The crowd keep reverent silence as the golden pomp comes on, with the goddess' self close in the wake of her ministers.

(III, xiii, 29 - 30)

He displays as much reverence for his mistress as he does for any divine power:

primus ego adspiciam notam de litore puppim,
et dicam: "nostros advehit illa deos!"

I shall be first to get sight of the well-known craft from the shore, and shall say: "That sail bears hither my gods!"

(II, xi, 43 - 44)

As Tibullus had called on Isis to help Delia in a time of sickness, Ovid entreats the same deity, and her husband Osiris, to come to the aid of Corinna, who has endangered her health (II, xiii, 7ff). Like Tibullus, too, he does not expect help as the result of any personal homage paid, but rather charges the deity, if there really is any power present, to reward his mistress for the rites that she has observed.

Ovid is by no means prepared to assert that there are no gods, that there is no superhuman power governing the universe. He always allows some reservations when speaking on the subject, as evidenced by his words on the death of Tibullus:

> cum rapiunt mala fata bonos--ignoscite fasso!--
> "sollicitor" nullos esse putare deos.

> When evil fate sweeps away the good--forgive me who say it!--I am "tempted" to think there are no gods.

(III, ix, 35 - 36)

It is doubt again that is expressed when Ovid considers the way in which the faithless fair appear to go unpunished:

> aut sine re nomen deus est frustraque timetur
> et stulta populos credulitate movet;
> aut, siquis deus est, teneras amat ille puellas
> et nimium solas omnia posse iubet.

> Either God is a name without substance and feared for naught, moving peoples through stupid trustfulness, or, if there is a god, he is in love with the tender fair, and too quick to ordain that they alone may do all things.

(III, iii, 23 - 26)

At best, he thinks of the gods as being anthropomorphic, beings created in his own image, though somewhat more powerful, as subsequent lines of the previously cited poem show:

> di quoque habent oculos, di quoque pectus habent!
> si deus ipse forem, numen sine fraude liceret
> femina mendaci falleret ore meum;
> ipse ego iurarem verum iurare puellas . . . ;

> Gods, too have eyes, gods, too, have hearts! Were I myself divine, unharmed might women cheat my godhead with lying lips. I myself would swear that womankind swore true . . . ;

(III, iii, 42 - 45)

at other times, as on the occasion when, according to Roman custom,

the images of the gods are paraded before the spectators at the races, Ovid cheers for his favourite god, exhorting it to bring him luck (III, ii). At such times he reduces the gods to the level of the twentieth-century rabbit's foot or the four-leaf clover.

Ovid's uncertain religious beliefs result, as might be expected, in uncertainty as to whether any part of man survives the funeral pyre. In the elegy mourning the death of Tibullus, he writes,

> Si tamen e nobis aliquid nisi nomen et umbra
> restat, in Elysia valle Tibullus erit.

> Yet, if aught survives from us beyond mere name and shade, in the vale of Elysium Tibullus will abide.

(III, ix, 59 - 60)

On another occasion, Ovid expresses the opinion that the soul does not survive the body:

> stulte, quid est somnos, gelidae nisi mortis imago!
> longa quiescendi tempora fata dabunt.

> Fool! what else is sleep but the image of chill death? As for repose, the fates will give long time for that.

(II, ixB, 41 - 42)

In the poem on the death of Corinna's parrot,[90a] however, he ~~again~~ shows a desire to believe in a life after death:

> Colle sub Elysio nigra nemus ilice frondet,
> udaque perpetuo gramine terra viret.
> siqua fides dubiis, volucrum locus ille piarum
> dicitur, obscenae quo prohibentur aves.

> At the foot of a hill in Elysium is a leafy grove of dark ilex, and the moist earth is green with never-fading grass. If we may have faith in doubtful things, that place, we are told, is the abode of the pious winged kind, and from it impure fowl are kept away.

(II, vi, 49 - 52)

[90a] See above, p. 19 re earlier animal amatory.

The only immortality of which Ovid is confident, however, is that which his verses will bring:

> Ergo, cum silices, cum dens patientis aratri
> depereant aevo, carmina morte carent.

> Yea, though hard rocks and though the tooth of the enduring ploughshare perish with passing time, song is untouched by death,
>
> (I, xv, 31 - 32)

and thus he is able to say,

> ergo etiam cum me supremus adederit ignis,
> vivam, parsque mei multa superstes erit.

> I, too, when the final fires have eaten up my frame, shall still live on, and the great part of me survive my death.
>
> (I, xv, 41 - 42)

For the true identity of the mistresses of the other elegists it is necessary to rely on the word of Apuleius, noted novelist of the second century A.D.: "accusent C. Catullum quod Lesbiam pro Clodia nominavit, et Ticidam similiter quod quae Metella erat, Perillam scripsit, et Propertium qui Cynthiam dicat Hostiam dissimulet et Tibullum quod ei sit Plania in animo, Delia in versu" (Apologia, X). "They might charge C. Catullus with using the name Lesbia in place of Clodia; and Ticida, likewise, because she who was Metella was written by him as Perilla; and Propertius who, concealing the name Hostia, said Cynthia; and Tibullus because she who was Plania to him in real life was Delia in verse." In the case of Ovid, however, he himself reveals the identity of the mistress of his verses, Corinna:

> non est certa meos quae forma invitet amores--
> centum sunt causae, cur ego semper amem.

> 'Tis no fixed beauty that calls my passion forth--there are a hundred causes to keep my always in love.
>
> (II, iv, 9 - 10)

The Corinna of the moment may be a modest girl whom the poet loves, in his fancy and in his verse, for her innocence; she may be a saucy girl who gives promise of sharing her friendly embraces; she may be austere, learned, or simple; she may be complimentary or faultfinding, dainty or masculine in manner, a sweet singer, a skilful musician, a graceful dancer, tall, short, well dressed, plain, fair, dark, youthful, or more mature. Having identified the Corinna of his verses with such care, he concludes,

> Denique quas tota quisquam probet urbe puellas,
> noster in has omnis ambitiosus amor.
>
> In fine, whatever fair ones anyone could praise in all the city--my love is candidate for the favours of them all.
>
> (II, iv, 47 - 48)

Thus, with a Corinna to fit each occasion, Ovid deals with subjects common to love elegy.

Following the tradition handed down from the Alexandrians, Ovid personifies love in the form of Cupid whom he describes as the <u>saeve puer</u> "cruel boy" (I, i, 5), and whom he depicts as being armed with arrows and fire:

> me miserum! certas habuit puer ille sagittas.
> uror . . . .
>
> Ah, wretched me! Sure were the arrows that yon boy had. I am on fire . . . .
>
> (I, i, 25 - 26)

Being of an analytical nature, he notes the signs of Cupid's attack:

the bed seems hard, the covers will not stay in place, sleeplessness persists, and many aches and pains appear. Under such circumstances, he concludes, it is best to yield:

> Cedimus, an subitum luctando accendimus ignem?
> cedamus! leve fit, quod bene fertur, onus.

> Shall I yield? or by resisting kindle still more the inward-stealing flame that has me? Let me yield! light grows the burden that is well borne.
>
> (I, ii, 9 - 10)

The comparison of the lover to the soldier and the expression of the affairs of love in the terminology of the battlefield appear in Ovid's elegies. He speaks of the furtherance of his love affairs as mea bella, "my campaigns" (II, xviii, 12) and uses a similar term, militiae signa . . . tuae, "the standard of your own campaigns" (I, xi, 12) to describe that of Corinna's maid, Nape. On the winning of his mistress' love, Ovid boasts:

> non humiles muri, non parvis oppida fossis
> cincta, sed est ductu capta puella meo!

> It is no lowly walls, no towns girt round by little moats, that I have taken by my generalship--but a girl!
>
> (II, xii, 7 - 8)

He goes on to explain,

> me duce ad hanc voti finem, me milite veni;
> ipse eques, ipse pedes, signifer ipse fui.

> I myself have been the captain in the march to my prayed-for end, I myself the soldiery; 'tis I have been cavalry, 'tis I have been infantry, 'tis I have been standardbearer.
>
> (II, xii, 13 - 14)

One whole poem (I, ix) deals with the ways in which a lover may be compared to a soldier. Youth and high spirits are sought in the soldier;

the same qualities are sought by the maid in her lover. Both lover and soldier wake at night. Both sleep on the ground, the soldier before his leader's tent, the lover before his mistress' door. Each must endure hard journeys. One watches the foe; the other his rival. Both soldier and lover take advantage of the night, while those hostile to them sleep, and finally, Mars, god of war, and Venus, goddess of love, are so capricious that the fate of any soldier or lover cannot be foretold.

The gather-ye-rosebuds theme, so common in the elegies of Tibullus and Propertius, appears less often in those of Ovid. In fact, it is interesting to note in the writings of the latter that the chief exponent of this theme is a despicable old bawd, Dipsas, who, prompted by avarice, warns a young lady,

> labitur occulte fallitque volubilis aetas,
> et celer admissis labitur annus equis.

> The stream of a lifetime glides smoothly on and is past before we know, and swift the year glides by with horses at full speed.

(I, viii, 49 - 50)

Ovid states, like the other elegists, that lovers are the special care of the gods. Where he had formerly feared the dark shadows of night, he is now able to walk fearlessly, sustained by Cupid and Venus. In lines which are tempered, perhaps, by the fact that they are spoken by old Dipsas, the bawd, Ovid conforms to the belief, concerning which Propertius had entertained some doubts, that the gods wink at the perjuries of lovers:

> nec, siquem falles, tu periurare timeto--
> commodat in lusus numina surda Venus.

> . . . nor fear to swear falsely if deceiving anyone--Venus lends deaf ears to love's deceipts.
>
> (I, viii, 85 - 86)

In any event, he later puts Dipsas' teaching into practice, declaring,

> per Venerem iuro puerique volatilis arcus,
> me non admissi criminis esse reum!

> By Venus I swear, and by the bows of her winged boy, I am not guilty of the charge you bring!
>
> (II, vii, 27 - 28)

He trusts that the subsequent prayer will suffice:

> tu, dea, tu iubeas animi periuria puri
> Carpathium tepidos per mare ferre Notos!

> Thou, goddess, mayst thou bid the warm South-wind sweep o'er the Carpathian deep the false oaths of a harmless heart!
>
> (II, vii, 19 - 20)

Ovid depicts with clarity the trials and hardships of the lover who has been locked out. In one instance he urges, with a certain slyness in his proposal,

> Adspice--et ut videas, inmitia claustra relaxa--
> uda sit ut lacrimis ianua facta meis!

> Look!--and that you may see, unloose the pitiless barriers--how the door has been made wet with my tears.
>
> (I, vi, 17 - 18)

The lover, stretched out before the threshold of his cruel mistress, must suffer <u>longa pruinosa frigora nocte</u>, "long cold through the rimy night" (II, xix, 22). In protest he exclaims,

> Ergo ego sustinui, foribus tam saepe repulsus,
> ingenuum dura ponere corpus humo?

> Can it be that I have endured it--to be so oft repulsed from your doors, and to lay my body down, a free born man, on the hard ground?
>
> (III, xiA, 9 - 10)

Like Catullus, who had written, Odi et amo, "I loath and love," and like Tibullus, who echoed the theme, Ovid gives expression to the emotions by which a man is tossed when the one he loves does not treat him honorably. At one time he writes,

> mens abit et morior quotiens peccasse fateris,
> perque meos artus frigida gutta fluit.
> tunc amo, tunc odi frustra quod amare necesse est;
> tunc ego, sed tecum, mortuus esse velim!

My mind fails me and I suffer death each time you confess your sin, and through my frame the blood runs cold. Then do I love you, then try in vain to hate what I love perforce; then would I gladly be dead--but dead with you!

(III, xiv, 37 - 40)

A similar sentiment is expressed again in brief but pointed words:

> . . . ego nec sine te nec tecum vivere possum,

. . . I can live neither with you nor without . . . .

(III, xi, 39)

Ovid shares his predecessors' concern that people, having lost a true sense of value, should worship wealth;

> eruimus terra solidum pro frugibus aurum.
> possidet inventas sanguine miles opes.
> curia pauperibus clausa est--dat census honores;
> inde gravis iudex, inde severus eques!

We draw from the earth, instead of increase, the massy gold. The soldier possesses wealth begotten of his blood. The senate is closed to the poor--'tis rating brings office; 'tis that gives the juror weight, 'tis that makes a pattern of the knight!

(III, viii, 53 - 56)

In particular, Ovid is concerned that young ladies should choose money in preference to poetry and true love. Of what he has to offer he boasts,

sunt mihi pro magno felicia carmina censu,
et multae per me nomen habere volunt;

Felicitous song, instead of great possession, is mine, and many a fair one wishes for glory through me;

(II, xvii, 27 - 28)

and elsewhere he proclaims,

est quoque carminibus meritas celebrare puellas
dos mea; quam volui, nota fit arte mea.

My dower, too, it is to glorify the deserving fair in song; whoever I have willed is made famous by my art.

(I, x, 59 - 60)

Old Dipsas, the bawd, however, being of a more mercenary and materialistic nature, does not hold the poet's love or the poet's gifts in such high esteem:

Ecce, quid iste tuus praeter nova carmina vates
donat? amatoris milia multa leges.

Think, what does your fine poet give you besides fresh verses? You will get many thousands of lover's lines to read,

(I, viii, 57 - 58)

and the girls and Corinna seem to be swayed by her sentiments, as seen in Ovid's subsequent complaint:

Et quisquam ingenuas etiamnunc suspicit artes,
aut tenerum dotes carmen habere putat?
Ecce, recens dives parto per vulnera censu
praefertur nobis sanguine pastus eques!

And does anyone still respect the freeborn arts, or deem tender verse brings any dower? Look you, a newly-rich, a knight fed fat on blood, who won his rating by dealing wounds, is preferred to me!

(III, viii, 1 - 2, 9 - 10)

Thus, left forsaken by the mistress he loves, the disconsolate poet cries out,

o si neclecti quisquam deus ultor amantis
tam male quaesitas pulvere mutet opes!

O were there only some god to avenge the neglected lover, and change to dust gains so ill-got.

(III, viii, 65 - 66)

Ovid is disgusted with the practice whereby the women of Rome sell their love to the highest bidder, and he vents his indignation in speech forceful enough to shame even the most brazen:

Stat meretrix certo cuivis mercabilis aere,
et miseras iusso corpore quaerit opes;
devovet imperium tamen haec lenonis avari
et, quod vos facitis sponte, coacta facit.

'Tis the harlot stands for sale at the fixed price to anyone soe'er, and wins her wretched gains with body at the call; yet even she calls curses on the power of the greedy pander, and does because compelled what you perform of your own will.

(I, x, 21 - 24)

Placing the avaricious mistress on a level lower than that of the beasts, he continues:

Sumite in exemplum pecudes ratione carentes;
turpe erit, ingenium mitius esse feris.
non equa munus equum, non taurum vacca poposcit;
non aries placitam munere captat ovem.
sola viro mulier spoliis exultat ademptis,

Look for pattern to the beasts of the field, unreasoning though though they are; 'twill shame you to find the wild things gentler than yourself. Mare never claimed gift from stallion, nor cow from bull; the ram courts not the favoured ewe with gift. 'Tis only woman glories in the spoil she takes from man . . .

(I, x, 25 - 29)

The evil is a serious one, and the poet uses forceful speech, fitting the occasion, to shock the reader into a realization of the wrong that is being done.

Time and again Ovid satirizes the foolish man who would attempt to make his wife faithful by force:

> Si tibi non opus est servata, stulte, puella,
> at mihi fac serves, quo magis ipse velim!

> If you feel no need of guarding your love for yourself, O fool, see that you guard her for me, that I may desire her the more!

(II, xix, 1 - 2)

Elsewhere he goes on to explain,

> Quidquid servatur cupimus magis, ipsaque furem
> cura vocat; pauci, quod sinit alter, amant.

> Whatever is guarded we desire the more, and care itself invites the thief; few love what another concedes.

(III, iv, 25 - 26)

Like Propertius, who had stated,

> nam nihil invitae tristis custodia prodest:
> quam peccare pudet, Cynthia, tuta sat est.

> For no stern guardian can save her that will not be saved: she alone is surely guarded, my Cynthia, who is ashamed to sin,

(II, vi, 39 - 40)

Ovid affirms,

> Dure vir, inposito tenerae custode puellae
> nil agis; ingenio est quaeque tuenda suo.

> Hard husband, by setting a keeper over your tender wife you nothing gain; 'tis her own nature must be each woman's guard.

(III, iv, 1 - 2)

Because of Ovid's sophistication and urbanity, his verses contain a good deal of worldly wisdom, as illustrated by the above citations. Thus, it may well be argued that, by holding up a mirror to folly, he is in his own way a teacher.

Each of the Latin love-elegists, in turn, had contributed something to the development of the elegy. Catullus, dominated as he was by a great passion, had given elegy a new depth and intensity, and through his translation and interpretation of the Alexandrians seems to have played a major part in bridging the gap between Greek and Latin elegy. Gallus had been the first to write a sizable quantity of elegies, thus establishing the verse form in Latin literature though, unfortunately, his works did not survive, and his contribution to the development of the various themes cannot be appraised. Tibullus had polished and refined the Latin elegy and had stressed a number of themes, including patriotism, love of rural life, interest in antiquity, and the thought of his mistress mourning over his ashes. Propertius had employed many of the themes used by Tibullus and had added a wealth of material from mythology.

Ovid made the Latin elegy, more than ever before, love-elegy. He enlarged upon themes such as that of Cupid with his arrows and fire, the lover locked out, the idea that every lover is a soldier, the foolishness of attempting to make a woman faithful by force, and the evil of the avaricious mistress. Furthermore, Ovid brought to the elegy a brilliance of style, a smoothness of meter, a sparkling wit, and a degree of polish that had never been equalled before and that has stood as a model for all succeeding authors of elegiac verse.

Ovid's death marked the end of the great age of elegiac poetry.[91] In the period that followed, some elegies were written

[91] Butler in OCD, s.v., "Elegiac Poetry, Latin, 2," p. 312.

for which the authorship has never been determined with certainty, while the names of some poets, such as Arruntius Stella, Passenus Paullus, and Pliny the Younger have survived, but their elegies have been lost.[92] The Anthologia Latina has preserved a number of elegies (mainly epigrams) which are attributed to Seneca and Petronius.[93] In the ~~following~~ same century Martial wrote epigrams in the elegiac meter, and in the fourth century Ausonius and Claudian wrote poetry which included elegies.[94]

During the medieval period a considerable amount of Latin lyric poetry was written in other than the elegiac meter, and a number of the poems written in elegiacs dealt with religious subjects rather than the themes of the classical elegists. Throughout this period, however, it seems that Ovid was the chief inspiration for writers of secular Latin elegy. Maximianus, who lived in the middle of the sixth century,[95] shows indications of Ovid's influence in his

[92] Carter, pp. xlvi - xlvii.

[93] Butler, ibid. p. 312.

[94] Butler, ibid. p. 312.

Ausonius (d. c. A.D. 395) wrote in various meters, including the hexameter, elegiac, and hendecasyllabic. He wrote over a hundred epigrams, some in Greek and others translated from Greek. His poems, as a whole, do not come as near to the classical standard as those of Claudian. (Souter in OCD, p. 126)

Claudian (in Rome and Milan A.D. 395 - 404, d.?) wrote panegyrics, invectives, and short, epigrammatic pieces. He was a master of allegory, mythological allusions, and elaborate similes. (Waddell in OCD, p. 196)

[95] Carter, p. xlvii.

elegies,[96] and six hundred years later it was Ovid to whom the writers of elegy were still turning. A twelth century poem from the manuscript of Ripoll bears out this point. Where Ovid had written,

> Aestus erat, mediamque dies exegerat horam;
> apposui medio membra levanda toro.
> pars adaperta fuit, pars altera clausa fenestrae,

> 'Twas sultry, and the day had passed its mid hour; I laid my members to rest them on the middle of my couch. One shutter of my window was open, the other shutter was closed . . . ,

(I, v, i - 3)

the later author has echoed his lines.

> Sol ramium fervens medium dum scandit olimpi,
> fessur pernimium membra thoro posui.
> ostia clauduntur, non clauditur una fenestra.[97]

Indeed, the whole of the latter poem shows considerable indebtedness to its classical counterpart.

From indications such as those cited above, one may conclude that each successive generation of post-Augustan elegists looked not to their immediate predecessors but to the great classical elegists, and Ovid in particular, for inspiration.

[96] Compare Maximianus, Elegy V (Baehrens, v. pp. 340 sqq.) with Ovid Am. III, vii.

[97] Found in F. J. E. Raby, A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages, Vol. II (Oxford, 1957), p. 241.

## CHAPTER VII

## MILTON

As the Latin elegists of the Medieval period had looked not to their immediate predecessors but to the great Augustan poets for inspiration, John Milton, regarded as the greatest English writer of Latin elegy,[98] did likewise. In the Apology for Smectymnus be tells how his literary enthusiasm was first aroused by the classical elegists: "I . . . was not unstudied in . . . the smooth elegiac poets, whereof the schools are not scarce, whom both for the pleasing sound of their numerous writing, which in imitation I found most easy, and most agreeable to nature's part in me, and for their matter, which what it is there be few who know not, I was so allured to read that no recreation came to me better welcome."[99] It is therefore quite natural that some of his early verse attempts should have been in Latin elegiacs.

Milton was born in London on December 9, 1608.[100] The son of a properous and cultivated scrivener, he was given an excellent education. During his early years, he studied at home under the guidance of Thomas Young, the Puritan clergyman to whom he later addressed his fourth

[98] James Holly Hanford, A Milton Handbook[3] (New York, 1944), states, "The whole body of Milton's Latin verse represents the finest achievement ever attained in this medium by an Englishman," p. 136.

[99] Hanford, pp. 365 - 6.

[100] See the following on Milton's life:
Hanford, pp. 1 - 67 and Appendix.
Masson, David, The Life of John Milton, 6 vols. (London, 1871, reprinted 1946).

Latin elegy, in which he credited his boyhood teacher with imparting to him a love of the Classics:

> Primus ego Aonios illo praeeunte recessus
> Lustrabam, & bifidi sacra vireta jugi,
>
> First going back in time I saw the sward divine,
> With him as guide, on cleft Aonia's mount.[101]

After graduating from Saint Paul's school, where he had formed a strong friendship for Charles Diodati, the man to whom he afterwards wrote his first and sixth elegies, Milton entered Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1625. It was during the subsequent years, while attending the university, that he wrote his book of Latin elegies.

Although he lived in a different country, and although he came sixteen hundred years later than the great classical elegists, Milton was in some ways a kindred spirit to his Roman predecessors. Having rounded out his education with a visit to Italy, where he won highest praise from the men of letters, including Manso, the patron of Tasso, he would, like Ovid have journeyed to the classical shrines of Sicily and Greece had not his sense of duty prompted him to return to England where political unrest threatened the country.

[101] Milton, John, "The First Book of Elegies," The Poetical Works of John Milton, ed. Helen Darbishire (London, 1958), selection 4, lines 29 - 30. All subsequent citations from Milton are from the above edition referred to within the work by selection and line. All accompanying translations are my own.

Milton's greatest similarity to the classical elegists, however, appears in his Latin elegies. Like the early elegists of Greece, he employs the elegiac meter to write on a wide variety of subjects. Like the Alexandrians, he is a scholarly poet. Like Tibullus, he is a deeply religious writer. Like Propertius, he delights in filling his lines with material from mythology. Like Ovid, he displays great skill in the use of stylistic devices. Whereas Propertius had boasted of being the Roman Callimachus, Milton might well have claimed to be the successor of all of the classical elegists.

The elegiac meter, as has been seen, is a versatile form of verse, and Milton uses it for a variety of themes. The first, fourth, and sixth are epistolary elegies, the second and third are poems of mourning, the fifth and seventh deal with springtime and love, and the concluding elegies are epigrammatic in nature.

One of the devices employed by Milton, and one which Vergil had previously used with great success, is that of depicting a scene including a number of people and then singling out one from the crowd. In the seventh elegy, after looking at the passing throngs of pretty girls, Milton notes,

Unam forte aliis supereminuisse notabam.

By chance, I noticed one surpassing all the rest.

(VII, 61)

The best example of his use of this device, however, appears in the third elegy. Milton thinks first of the death and destruction which have ravaged his native land. Next he turns his thoughts to the disaster of wars abroad. Then, finally, having provided a sorrowful setting, he turns his attention to the death of one man:

> At te praecipue luxi, dignissime praesul,
> Wintoniaeque olim gloria magna tuae.
>
> But first, most worthy bishop, grief for you did swell,
> Winchester's glory great in former years.
>
> (III, 13 - 14)

Following the style of the classical elegists, Milton makes use of the pathetic fallacy. In the fourth elegy, he speaks to the letter he is sending, and expects it to react in a mortal manner. In the fifth elegy, he speaks of the sun and the earth as if they were human lovers. On more than one occasion, too, he represents death as a personified abstraction (II, 3, 17; III, 5, 15 ff).

Another device of the classical elegists, antithesis, employed with the greatest of skill by Ovid,[101a] appears again in the elegies of Milton. In describing Sylvanus, the English author of Latin elegy writes,

> Sylvanusque sua Cyparissi fronde revinctus,
> Semicaperque Deus, semideusque caper.
>
> Again Sylvanus' locks with cypress leaves are bound;
> The goat exists half-god, the god, half goat.
>
> (V, 121 - 122)

A second example of antithesis from the same poem, reminiscent of Ovid's technical skill, is also reminiscent of his insight into human nature. Describing a mountain nymph whom Faunus is pursuing, Milton writes,

> Jamque latet, latitansque cupit male tecta videri,
> Et fugit, & fugiens pervelit ipsa capi.

[101a] E.g. III, xiv, 5 - 8; III, xi, 39.

She hides, though poorly covered, hoping to be seen;
She flees, and, fleeing, wishes to be caught.

While he is by no menas a slavish copyist of the classical elegists, what might best be described, perhaps, as echoes of their works appear throughout Milton's lines. Both Catullus and Milton refer to written messages as if the paper could actually speak. Catullus entreats the goddesses, . . . facite haec charta loquatur anus," . . . let the paper speak this in its old age" (LXVIIIA, 6). Milton opens as elegiac letter to Charles Diodati as follows:

Tandem, chare, tuae mihi pervenere tabellae,
Pertulit & voces nuntia charta tuas,

At last your letter came, dear friend, and brought to me
Your words (the paper spoke for you, I know),
(I, 1 - 2)

and elsewhere he gives this instruction to a letter which is being sent to Thomas Young:

Utque solet, multam sit dicere cura salutem
Dicere quam decuit, si modo adesset, herum.
Haec quoque paulum oculos in humum defixa modestos,
Verba verecundo sis memor ore loqui:

Take care to greet him warmly, as your lord would do
If he were there; let cordial speech abound.

Be mindful; briefly lowering your modest gaze,
With loyal lips continue furthermore.
(IV, 47 - 50)

The idea expressed in Catullus' oxymoron, in which he speaks of love as having a dulcem amaritiem, "sweet bitterness" (LXVIII, 18), finds its way through Tibullus' lines, in which he says of love, iuvat ipse dolor, "the pain itself delights" (II, v, 110), to those of Milton who writes, lacrymis dulcis amaror inest, "a sweet bitterness is

present in my tears" (I, 40).[102] Quite a striking similarity is also found between the following lines of Ovid:

> "Vive" deus "posito" siquis mihi dicat "amore!"
> deprecer--usque adeo dulce puella malum est.

> "Lay aside thy loves," should some god say to me, "and live without them," I would pray him not ask it--even so sweet an evil are the fair,
>
> (II, ixB, 25 - 26)

and those of Milton:

> Deme meos tandem, verum nec deme furores,
> Nescio cur, miser est suaviter omnis amans:

> My frenzy take; yet take it not, assuredly;
> I know not why, each lover is so sweetly sad.
>
> (VII, 99 - 100)

Both Propertius and Milton look for a cure for love-sickness in philosophy. Propertius, at first having his doubts, asks a friend, Lynceus,

> quid tua Socraticis tibi nunc sapientia libris
> proderit aut rerum dicere posse vias?

> What will avail thee now thy wisdom drawn from Socratic books, what the power to set forth the cause of things?
>
> (II, xxxiv, 27 - 28)

But later, he himself resolves to go to Athens:

> illic vel stadiis[103] animum emendare Platonis
> incipiam aut hortis, docte Epicure, tuis;

[102] While Milton was undoubtedly familiar with this oxymoron as it was used by the Latin elegists, it is not impossible that he may also have seen it in the following Greek verses: Sappho 37; cf Plat. Phil 46 D, E (ἔροσ). Poseidippus, 134: μέλοι δ' ἡμῖν ὁ γλυκύπικροσ ἔρωσ.

[103] "stadiis" = gymnasium--i.e. the Academia where Plato taught.

> There I will begin to clear my soul of error in Plato's Academe, or in Thy gardens, learned Epicurus . . . .
>
> (III, xxi, 25 - 26)

In like manner, Milton, having been inflamed by a pretty girl, seeks help in philosophy. Later he is able to write,

> Scilicet abreptum sic me malus impulit error,
> Indocilisque aetas prava magistra fuit.
> Donec locraticos umbrosa Academia rivos
> Praebuit, admissum dedocuitque jugum.
>
> My wayward guide was follish youth, I must confess,
> And evil error drove me forcibly.
>
> Then Academic shades showed me Socratic streams;
> To cast away my yoke was their advice.
>
> (VII, 105 - 8) (VIIA, 3 - 6)

A certain similarity is seen between the ways in which Propertius and Milton compliment the young ladies who have attracted them. Declaring that Cynthia is too charming to be even compared with the women famed for their beauty in times gone by, Propertius writes,

> cedite iam, divae, quas pastor viderat olim
> Idaeis tunicas ponere verticibus!
>
> Yield now, ye goddesses, whom of old the shepherd saw lay aside your raiment on the heights of Ida!
>
> (II, ii, 13 - 14)

Making a similar boast for the fair young ladies of England, Milton echoes the lines:

> Cedite laudatae toties Heroides[104] olim,
> Et quaecunque vagum cepit amica Jovem.
>
> Withdraw, heroic maidens, praised in ancient tale,
> And all the nymphs that roving Jove did woo.
>
> (I, 63 - 64)

[104] Milton's familiarity with the works of Ovid is reflected in his choice of the word "Heroides," the title of Ovid's collection of love-letters from famous women.

Recalling the Trojans who had lost their lives on account of Helen, Propertius writes,

pulchrius hac fuerat, Troia, perire tibi /_Cynthiae_/

Better, O Troy, to have perished for Cynthia's sake.
(II, iii, 34)

and Milton, recalling how Torquato had suffered from unrequited love, repeats the theme:

Ah miser ille tuo quanto felicius aevo
Perditus, & propter te, Leonora, foret!

Poor wretch! how much more blest had been destruction's dart
In your times, Leonora, sent by you!
(To Leonora, II, 3 - 4)

Where Propertius strikes a patriotic note in praise of Rome:

natura hic posuit, quidquid ubique fuit.

. . . here hath nature placed whate'er is best in all the world,

(III, xxii, 18)

Milton sounds a similar strain in honor of the London he loves:

Tu nimium felix intra tua moenia claudis
Quicquid formosi pendulus orbis habet.

And thou, too richly blest, within thy walls enclose
All beauty which the pendant earth contains.
(I, 75 - 76)

As Tibullus and Propertius, prompted by their patrons, sing in praise of Rome, Milton proclaims the glories of London and the surrounding countryside. His praise is not a panegyric of the men in high office, nor is it a boast of his country's power. What Milton appreciates most is the beauty which he sees around him. To explain such beauty, he must resort to mythology:

Creditur huc geminis venisse invecta columbis
  Alma pharetrigero milite cincta Venus,
Huic Cnidon, & riguas Simoentis flumine valles,
  Huic Paphon, & roseam posthabitura Cypron.

It is believed that kindly Venus, borne by doves
  Came here, and brought her quiver-bearing son,
That Cnidus, Paphos, Cyprus, rosy realms she loves,
  And Troas' watered vales might be outdone.
(I, 81 - 84)

Milton, however, shows a special appreciation for the works of Ovid:

Outinam vates numquam graviora tulisset
  Ille Tomitano flebilis exul agro;
Non tunc Jonio quicquam cessisset Homero
  Neve foret victo laus tibi prima, Maro.

O that the bard had never seen a darker day,
  That woeful exile in Tomitian land;
To Chian Homer he would ne'er have given way,
  And Vergil would not on the summit stand.
(I, 21 - 24)

It is not surprising, therefore, that his verses contain a number of features which appear to be reminiscent of Ovid's work.

In the fifteenth poem of his first book, Ovid expresses a desire to drink from the Castalian fountain:

. . . mihi flavus Apollo
  pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua,

. . . for me may golden Apollo minister full cups from the Castalian fount.
(I, xv, 35 - 36)

Sharing his predecessors appreciation of the fountain, and claiming to excel his capacity for the inspirational water, Milton boasts,

Pieriosque hausi latices, Clioque favente,
  Castalio sparsi laeta ter ora mero.

Thrice-blessed lips I sprinkled with Castalia's wine;
  At Clio's will, I drained the Muses' fount.
(IV, 31 - 32)

In the poem cited above (I, xv), Ovid speaks of the auriferi ripa benigna Tagi, "the bounteous banks of Tagus bearing gold" (I, xv, 34), and Milton, attempting to describe the ground in Heaven, embellishes the above line:

> Flumina vernantes lambunt argentea campos,
> Ditior Hesperio flavet arena Tago.
>
> O'er sand more rich than western Tagus' golden strand,
> The silver streams were washing vernal ground.
> (III, 45 - 46)

In view of his predilection for Ovid's verse, it is possible that Milton had two passages from Ovid in mind when he wrote the concluding lines of his third elegy. Ovid complains of the coming of Aurora, the dawn, who forces the soldier to take up his arms, the farmer to resume his plowing, the young lad to face his harsh master, the woman to take up her weaving, and, worst of all, forces him to leave the embraces of his mistress (I, xiii); Milton, laments her arrival since he has been roused from a pleasant dream in which he has envisioned the Bishop of Winchester being welcomed into Heaven (III, 66 - 67). Both Ovid and Milton refer to the fact that Aurora is the mistress of Cephalus. It is realized, however, that this relationship is frequently mentioned elsewhere in Greek and Latin literature. Ovid, arising from his mistress' couch, exclaims,

> proveniant medii sic mihi saepe dies!
>
> May my lot bring many a midday like to this!
> (I, v, 26)

Milton, arising from the couch on which he has dreamt of the Bishop of Winchester, repeats the wish,

> Talia contingant somnia saepe mihi.
>
> May I be often touched by sleep so blest.
> (III, 68)

It is likewise interesting to note that both Ovid and Milton realize that the just often die while those less deserving of life continue to live. In his elegy on the death of Corinna's parrot, Ovid asserts,

> vivit edax vultur ducensque per aera gyros
> miluus et pluviae graculus auctor aquae;
> vivit et armiferae cornix invisa Minervae--
> illa quidem saeclis vix moritura novem;
> occidit illa loquax humanae vocis imago,
> psittacus, extremo munus ab orbe datum!
> optima prima fere manibus rapiuntur avaris;
> inplentur numeris deteriora suis.

> The greedy vulture lives on, and the kite that traces circles through the air, and the daw, harbinger of rain; the raven, too, hated by armour-bearing Minerva, lives on--it, at least, will hardly die after nine generations; the parrot, that loquacious image of the human voice, gift brought from the limit of the world, is no more! Best things are all too oft first swept away by the greedy hands of fate; the worse are suffered to fill out their tale of years.
>
> (II, vi, 33 - 40)

Sharing this feeling, Milton laments the death of the Beadle of the University of Cambridge:

> Magna sepulchrorum regina, satelles Averni
> Saeva nimis Musis, Palladi saeva nimis,
> Quin illos rapias qui pondus inutile terrae
> Turba quidem est telis ista petenda tuis.
>
> O Death, Avernus' aide, great queen of sepulchres,
> Too cruel to Muses, cruel to Pallas too,
> Ah why not sieze earth's lazy, worthless characters,
> A throng which should be sought by arrows true.
>
> (II, 17 - 20)

Like the Alexandrians and like the elegists of Rome, Milton uses traditional imagery to speak of love. Cupid, the god of love, is described as a comely, winged lad, equipped with a bow and arrows. His

temper has not softened since Alexandrian times:

> . . . (neque enim Deus ullus ad iras
> Promptior) . . . .
>
> No god more swiftly angers . . . .
>
> (VII, 11 - 12)

His arrows still cause a burning smart:

> Et quascunque agilis partes jaculator oberrat,
> Hei mihi, mille locis pectus inerme ferit
> Protinus insoliti subierunt corda furores
> Uror amans intus, flammaque totus eram.
>
> Against my helpless breast a thousand blows were flung,
> From whereso'er the agile archer went.
>
> Strange frenzy followed in my heart without delay;
> In love, I blazed inside, and all was burned.
>
> (VII, 71 - 74)

Unlike Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius, Milton did not deal with personal experiences when writing about love. His own temperament and training made it improper for him to celebrate a mistress in verse, a fact reflected in his elegies. His most sensual poetry pertains to the earth's desire to be caressed by the rays of the sun:

> Exuit invisam Tellus rediviva senectam,
> Et cupit amplexus, Phoebe, subire tuos;
> Et cupit, & digna est, quid enim formosius illa,
> Pandit ut omniferos luxuriosa sinus.
>
> Now Earth strips off unwelcome age and, in her prime,
> O Phoebus, yearns to yield to your embrace,
>
> And she of shapely form, deserving her desires,
> Voluptuous, doth fruitful breasts disclose.
>
> (V, 55 - 58)

Thus stirred by spring, the earth entreats,

> Frigora, Phoebe, mea melius captabis in umbra,
> Huc ades, ardentes imbue rore comas,
> Mollior egelida veniet tibi somnus in herba,
> Huc ades, & gremio lumina pone meo.

A choicer coolness will my shadows yield to you;
On soothing herbs will come a softer rest.
O Phoebus, come, and wet your fiery locks with dew.
O come, and place your rays upon my breast.
(V, 85 - 88)

Similarly, the complaint of the unfortunate lover who must sleep on the hard, cold doorstep, excluded by unyielding doors has disappeared. The closest Milton comes to this conventional theme is when, having seen an exceptionally beautiful girl amidst the passing throng, he allows her to pass from sight, not knowing whether he shall ever see her again (VII, 60 ff, 70 ff). Whereas the classical lover is merely separated from his mistress by an unyielding door, Milton is separated by an unknown distance. Despite this fact however, and despite the poet's profuse protestation of love, the reader cannot be deeply moved by such an event.

The classical elegists are all greatly concerned that young women in general, and their own mistresses in particular, should sell their love to the highest bidder. Milton, without a mistress, is also without this problem. He treats the subject only once: . . . <u>numeribus saepe coemptus Amor</u> . . . , " . . . with presents love is often bought . . . " (V, 76). The brevity and impersonal nature of this comment make it clear that the matter is of no personal significance to him.

In place of love for a fascinating but faithless mistress, Milton puts emphasis on friendship in a broader sense. In the opening lines of his first elegy, he addresses Charles Diodatti as <u>chare</u>, a term of endearment, and in the sixth elegy he writes to him thus:

Carmine scire velis quam te redamemque colamque,
Crede mihi vix hoc carmine scire queas.

Belive me, in my verse the means could scarce be found
To show my love, if you should thus entreat.
(VI, 5 - 6)

He also displays a sincere and openhearted friendship for his boyhood teacher, Thomas Young, giving this instruction to the letter he is sending:

Utque solet, multam sit dicere cura salutem,
Decere quam decuit, si modo adesset, herum.

Take care to greet him warmly, as your lord would do
If he were there; let cordial speech abound.
(IV, 47 - 48)

There is a feeling among the classical poets that they are divinely inspired. While they may owe a certain indebtedness to the writings of their predecessors, their inspiration is a gift from Apollo and the Muses. In this regard, Propertius writes,

primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos
Italia per Graios orgia ferre choros.

I am the first with priestly service from an unsullied spring to carry Italian mysteries among the dances of Greece.[105]
(III, i, 3 - 4)

Speaking with somewhat more reticence concerning his ~~divinity~~ divine inspiration, Ovid gives expression to the same idea:

at sacri vates et divum cura vocamur:
sunt etiam qui nos numen habere putent.

Yes, we bards are called sacred, and the care of the gods; there are those who even think we have the god within.
(III, ix, 17 - 18)

In lines which show a strong similarity, Milton gives affirmation to the suggestion made by Ovid:

[105] I.e., to write on Italian subjects in Greek style.

Diis etenim sacer est vates, divumque sacerdos,
  Spirat & occultum pectus, & ora Jovem.

The bard is sacred to the gods, their priest below;
  Of Jove his lips and secret breast transpire.
(VI, 77 - 78)

In the field of religion, Milton, living after what he trusted in as being the more complete revelation of God through Christ, was free from the uncertainty of the classical elegists. Admittedly, on one occasion he promises Cupid,

Solus & in superis tu mihi summus eris.

Be thou the highest god, the only god for me.
(VII, 98, trans. 97)

This recognition, however, is merely a literary convention, just as Vergil, who at other times writes as a monotheist,[105a] includes the classical gods within the framework of the Aeneid. Milton's true tenets of faith are found in the concluding lines of the sixth elegy:

Paciferum canimus caelesti semine regem,
  Faustaque sacratis saecula pacta libris,
Vagitumque Dei, & stabulantem paupere tecto
  Qui suprema suo cum patre regna colit;
Stelliparumque polum, modulantesque aethere turmas,
  Et subito elisos ad sua fana Deos.
Dona quidem dedimus Christi natalibus illa,
  Illa sub auroram lux mihi prima tulit.

I hymn the King of Peace, of seed sent from on high,
  And sacred ages vowed in Holy Writ,
The lodging in the manger poor, the infant cry
  Of Christ (enthroned with God He now doth sit),

The starry sky with voices tuned in harmony,
  And false gods crushed at once before their shrine.
I give it to the day of Christ's nativity;
  It came to me as dawn began to shine.
(VI, 81 - 88)

105a Henry W. Prescott, The Development of Vergil's Art (Chicago, 1927), p. 250.

Milton is more than a poeta, he is a vates, a prophet of God.

Milton is the last of the important writers of Latin elegy and, though an Englishman, removed by many centuries, not unworthy of a place beside his classical models.[106] It is clear that he paid particular attention to the Augustan elegists, and Ovid in particular. Although differences in manners and morals affected his elegies, as seen in the instances cited above, he adopted many of the themes and tempers employed by his classical predecessors. Indeed, through his elegies, Milton furnishes a striking example of the way in which Greek and Latin literature have provided a major source of inspiration for one of the greatest of English poets.

[106] This view is supported by the noted classicists, E. K. Rand in Milton in Rustication, Hanford op. cit., p. 136.

## THE FIRST BOOK OF ELEGIES

### THE FIRST ELEGY, TO CHARLES DIODATI

At last your letter came, dear friend, and brought to me
  Your words (the paper spoke for you, I know),
From Chester on the western margin of the Dee,
  Which seeks the Irish Sea with headlong flow. 4

Believe me, it is such a joy that foreign lands
  Have reared a loving heart and loyal mind,
My comrade dear, now owed to me by distant strands,
  Who, summoned thence, a swift return will find. 8

That city holds me, washed by river Thames, tide-turned;
  In this fair realm I willingly abide,
Not wishing to return to reedy Cam, not burned
  By love of tutelary gods denied. 12

The barren fields repulse, denying pleasant shade;
  How ill-befitting Phoebus is that place!
I neither wish to bear a teacher's harsh tirade,
  Nor other things my nature counts disgrace. 16

If this is exile, visiting my father's place,
  And free from care, pursuing welcome rest,
I neither spurn my lot, nor count it a disgrace,
  Rejoicing in this state of exile blest. 20

O, that the bard had never seen a darker day,
  That woeful exile in Tomitian land;
To Chian Homer he would ne'er have given way,
  And Vergil would not on the summit stand. 24

Free time is granted here to seek the placid Muse;
  My life, my books, both carry me away.
When weary, in the curving theater I lose
  Myself, and then applaud some prattling play: 28

I hear a wastrel heir or old man full of wiles
  A suitor or a soldier who has laid
His arms aside, a lawyer, rich from ten-years trials,
  Who booms in court a meaningless tirade: 32

At times a crafty slave sustains the love-struck boy;
  Beneath the father's nose he slyly moves;
At times a maiden marvels at new warmth and joy,
  And while she knows not what love is, she loves. 36

If raging Tragedy a blood-stained staff doth shake,
  With rolling eyes and streaming hair unbound,
I look and grieve, yet wish to see the scenes that make
  Me mourn, when bitter-sweet my tears are found; 40

If joys are left untasted by a hapless youth;
  Deprived of love, alas! the lad doth die,
Or if from gloom the vengeful Stygian, free from ruth,
  With brand of death comes forth to terrify; 44

If Pelops' home laments, or Ilium the proud,
  Or incest is atoned by Creon's train.
Nor do I always hide among this urban crowd;
  Nor does the springtime pass for me in vain. 48

A planted grove of elms, nearby, appeals to me,
  A rural place where stately shade is cast,
And stars that breath caressing flame are there to see,
  A maiden chorus tripping lightly past. 52

How often shapely forms amaze my spellbound sight,
  (They could renew the youth of aged Jove!)
And lovely eyes, than precious stones more bright,
  Or than the sun 'round which the planets move. 56

And comely necks, than Pelops' twice-born arm more fair,
  Or else the way with nectar pure arrayed;
Distinguished, comely brows 'neath trembling locks of hair,
  The golden net which subtle Love hath laid; 60

Seductive cheeks, by which the hyacinth seems pale,
  Your flower, Adonis, with its blushing hue!
Withdraw, heroic maidens, praised in ancient tale,
  And all the nymphs that roving Jove did woo: 64

Give way Achaemenaean maids, with lofty brow,
  And you in Persian or in Moorish home;
Danaean nymphs, as well, give up your power now,
  And you who dwell in ancient Troy and Rome. 68

Let not Tarpeias' Muse in Pompey's pillars boast,
  In theater with rich Ausonian stoles:
Since brightest beauty now is found on Britain's coast,
  Let foreign girls accept their lesser roles. 72

O London, thou through toil of Dardan men arose;
  Beheld from far, thy tower-crowned head remains,
And thou, too richly blest, within thy walls enclose
  All beauty which the pendent earth contains. 76

The host of shining stars the peaceful heavens hold,
  The throng that serve Selene, goddess fair,
Are fewer than the graceful maids, adorned with gold,
  Who radiate their beauty everywhere. 80

It is believed that kindly Venus, borne by doves,
  Came here, and brought her quiver-bearing son,
That Cnidus, Paphos, Cyprus, rosy realms she loves,
  And Troas' watered vales might be outdone. 84

But while the grace of Cupid, sightless lad, permits,
  I plan to leave these favoured walls with speed,
And shun, afar, the dark disgrace which Circe knits,
  With moly, herb divine, to aid my need. 88

Return to reedy Cam is what I now intend;
  To seek the noisy school shall be my pleasure;
But, meanwhile, take this little gift, my faithful friend,
  A few forced words in alternating measure. 92

THE SECOND ELEGY, WRITTEN IN HIS SEVENTHEENTH YEAR

ON THE DEATH OF THE BEADLE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

O Beadle, once conspicuous with staff so bright,
  Oft wont to summon Pallas' flock by name,
Cruel Death, the final beadle, bears you from our sight
  And favour to her office doth disclaim. 4

Though crowned with temples whiter than the plumes, in truth,
  Beneath which Jove took hiding, it appears,
You should with charms of Thessaly have captured youth
  And drawn your span of life to Aeson's years, 8

Or, with a goddess asking, been recalled again
  From Stygian waves by Phoebus' healing skill.
When you were sent to summon gown-clad lines of men,
  Swift messenger, at your Apollo's will, 12

As winged Mercury, from Jove's celestial place,
  In Trojan courts, you too were wont to stand;
As Eurybates when, to fierce Achilles' face,
  He brought back Agamemnon's harsh command. 16

O Death, Avernus' aide, great queen of sepulchres,
  Too cruel to Muses, cruel to Pallas too,
Ah why not sieze earth's lazy, worthless characters,
  A throng which should be sought with arrows true? 20

In somber robes lament this man, Academy;
  Upon his bier of black let tears abound;
May Elegy herself moan measures mournfully;
  Throughout the school let doleful dirges sound. 24

## THE THIRD ELEGY, WRITTEN IN HIS SEVENTEENTH YEAR

### ON THE DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

As, sorrowing, I sat, in silence and alone,
  So many griefs were clinging to my mind:
On England's shores, it seemed, destruction made men moan,
  Which goddess Libitina left behind; 4

While fearful Death, with dread sepulchral torch, assayed
  The gleaming marble towers of the great
And shook the heavy walls, with gold and jasper laid,
  Nor feared to slay the lords of the estate. 8

I then recalled a leader famed, with brother fair,
  Whose bones were burned untimely on the pyre.
I seemed to see the heroes caught up in the air;
  All Belgium mourned to see her losses dire. 12

But first, most worthy bishop, grief for you did swell,
  Winchester's glory great in former years.
"O Death! more cruel than all except the king of Hell,"
  I wailed, my cheerless face dissolved in tears. 16

"O, is it not enough that groves your wrath should sense,
  And power o'er field of green be given you,
That lilies languish, breathed on by your pestilence,
  And rose, fair Venus' flower, and crocus too, 20

"That you do not permit the oak beside the stream,
  To marvel always at the passing flow?
The winged birds, with which the fluid sky doth teem,
  Though augurs, Death, at thy command lie low, 24

"As do the silent fish which Proteus' caverns feed,
  And thousand beasts that roam the shaded wood.
When so much power has been bestowed, thou thing of greed,
  Why joy to stain your hand with human blood, 28

"To sharpen deadly shafts against a noble breast,
  A spirit half-divine to thence depose?"
While I revolved such thoughts and wept, with soul distressed,
  From westward waves the evening star arose, 32

And Phoebus from the eastern shores his route had traced,
  And plunged his steeds in the Atlantic deep.
Upon the empty bed my weary limbs I placed;
  At once my eyes were closed by night and sleep. 36

A spacious field, it seemed to me, I roamed upon;
  My skill, alas, cannot describe the sight.
As mountain ridges blush before the sun at dawn,
  The whole was glowing with a rosy light. 40

As when the rainbow Thamus' daughter doth display,
  The earth with multicolored vesture gleamed;
Not thus did Spring, beloved of Zephyrus, array
  Alcinous' grounds with varied flowers, it seemed. 44

O'er sand more rich than western Tagus' golden strand,
  The silver streams were washing vernal ground.
The breath of zephyrs light flowed through a fragrance bland,
  With dewy air, 'mid roses all around. 48

On Ganges distant shores, a place, like this arrayed,
  The realm of Lucifer is said to be,
And while, neath grape-crowned vines, I marveled at the shade
  So dense, where places bright surrounded me, 52

Behold! at once, Winchester's bishop stood in sight;
  His beaming face effused a starlight-glow;
To golden sandals downward flowed his garments bright;
  His holy head bore bands as white as snow, 56

And while the reverend, aged man advanced, thus dressed,
  The floral earth with trembling pleasure sang;
Celestial ranks with jewelled wings applause expressed;
  Through purest air triumphant trumpets rang. 60

Each met with song the comrade new and with embrace,
  And One sent forth these sounds from lips sublime:
"O come, blest son, receive within your Father's place
  My joys, harsh labor vanquished for all time." 64

He spoke, and winged hosts touched harpstrings thereupon.
  But with the darkness went my golden rest,
And I was left to mourn, my sleep disturbed by dawn.
  May I be often touched by sleep so blest. 68

## THE FOURTH ELEGY, WRITTEN IN HIS EIGHTEENTH YEAR

### TO HIS TEACHER, THOMAS YOUNG, NOW ENGAGED IN THE CAPACITY OF PASTOR AMONG THE ENGLISH MERCHANTS OF HAMBURG

Across the boundless deep, my letter, haste away;
  Seek German fields o'er intervening seas;
Let nothing check your speeding flight or cause delay;
  Now burst the bonds of sloth; O hear my pleas. 4

I'll pray to youthful gods and old Aeolus too,
  Who checks the winds in their Sicilian cell;
I'll pray to Doris, with her nymphs, of azure hue,
  To give a placid path across her swell. 8

But you, if you are able, take the speedy team
  Which bore Medea from her husband's face,
Or that which took Triptolemus, the youth supreme,
  Eleusis left, to Scythian shores apace. 12

When you discern the tawny sand of Germany,
  Toward the walls of wealthy Hamburg go,
That city named for Hama, murdered ruthlessly,
  As men report, by Cimbrian cudgel blow. 16

There dwells, revered from times of old for piety,
  A worthy pastor, skilled to feed his sheep;
More dear than other portions of my soul is he;
  Indeed, perforce, but half a life I keep. 20

How many mountains interposed, how many seas,
  Alas! deprive me of my other part,
More dear than Socrates to Alcibiades
  Of Telamonic line, within my heart, 24

Or Aristotle to his noble pupil, son
  Of kind Olympias and Lybian Jove;
Amyntor's offspring and Philyra's Heros won
  Achilles' grace as he has won my love. 28

First going back in time I saw the sward divine,
  With him as guide, on cleft Aonia's mount;
Thrice blessed lips I sprinkled with Castalia's wine;
  At Clio's will, I drained the Muses' fount. 32

But thrice had flaming Aethon deigned the Ram to view
  And clothed its woolly back again with gold,
And, Chloris, twice you spread the aged earth anew
  With grass; upon it Auster twice laid hold; 36

While I was not allowed to hear his voice so sweet
  Or feast my eyes, as yet, upon his face;
This shows, you see, yourself, how I must needs entreat,
  So go! outrun the roaring East Wind's pace. 40

You'll find him soothing children dear upon his knee,
  Perchance, while seated by his gracious wife
Or reading massive volumes from antiquity
  And Scriptures of the God of truth and life, 44

Or filling feeble souls with Heaven's healthful dew,
  The noble service of religion sound.
Take care to greet him warmly, as your lord would do
  If he were there; let cordial speech abound. 48

Be mindful; briefly lowering your modest gaze,
  With loyal lips continue furthermore:
"If you have any time for Muses midst affrays,
  A faithful hand sends this from England's shore: 52

" 'Receive sincerest salutations, late, 'tis true;
  Thus may they come the more agreeably;
True greetings gave the tardy husband, overdue,
  To chaste Icarian Penelope. 56

" 'But why did "I" desire to praise so plain a crime,
  Which he could not make light by any art?
Charged justly, he admits he took too long a time,
  Ashamed that he had not fulfilled his part. 60

" 'Grant pardon to the suppliant who has confessed,
  For crimes are wont to wane when brought to light.
Wild beasts ope not their gaping jaws t'ward men distressed;
  Grim lions' claws no fallen victim smite. 64

" 'Cruel, javelin-bearing Thracians' breasts are brought to bay
  At sad entreaties of the suppliant;
By outstretched hands the lightning bolt is turned away;
  Small victims make the angry gods recant. 68

" 'For many days he had been moved to write to you;
  To cause no more delay was Love's command:
" ' 'Tis said by roving Rumour, evil's herald true,
  That wars are swelling in your neighbours' land; 72

" 'Around your walls and you, grim soldiery campaigns,
  And Saxon leaders armaments prepare;
Around you Enyo widely ravages the plains;
  Blood waters fields with slaughtered men sown there. 76

" 'Thrace yeilded up her war-god, Mars, to Germany;
  There father Mars' Odrysian horses sped;
The olive faded, fair throughout eternity;
  The goddess, hating brazen trumpets, fled. 80

" 'Alas! she fled the earth and flew to homes on high,
  Not last of maidens just to do so now.
While round about resounds the dreadful battle cry,
  Alone, in need, on foreign soil art thou. 84

" 'In want, in realms removed you seek the wages slight
  Not given to you by your fatherland.
Ah, land! Cruel parent! Harsher than the cliffs of white
  Struck by the surging sea along your strand 88

" 'Does it become you harmless children to expose
  Whom God, on looking down, has sent in trust,
Who, bringing joyous tidings from the sky, disclose
  The way unto the stars when we are dust? 92

" 'Does it become you, iron hearted land, to drive
  Them into realms removed to seek a dole?
Engulfed in Stygian shades you merit to survive,
  To languish with an ever empty soul! 96

" 'Not otherwise was Tishbite's prophet forced to tread
  Arabia's uneven desert sands
As o'er the pathless wastes with faltering feet he fled
  King Ahab and the dread Sidonian bands. 100

" 'Just so Cilician Paul, thrust from Emathia
  And lashed with whining whips, was sent away.
The thankless fishermen who lived in Gergessa
  Denied to Christ himself the right to stay. 104

"But you be brave! Let not hope fall, by cares oppressed;
  Let not pale terror shake your bones with fear,
Though you are round about by gleaming arms distressed,
  Though many missiles warn that death is near. 108

" 'No spear shall drink your blood; no weapons shall assail
  Your unprotected side with violence;
Beneath the shining shield of God you shall prevail,
  With him your champion and your defence. 112

" 'He who destroyed, 'neath Zion's walled citadel,
  Assyria's soldiers in the silent night,
And turned the forces old Damascus sent to quell
  The borders of Samaria to flight, 116

" 'Dismayed the crowding troops and cowering head of state,
  While brazen trumpets blared through empty space,
While hooves of horn made justy plains reverberate,
  And chariots shook the sandy soil apace, 120

" 'While neighing of the steeds of war was plain to hear,
  In headlong haste to join the battle then,
While sounds of clashing, clanging iron assailed the ear
  And deep, discordant murmurs of the men. 124 (122)

" 'Keep up your hope (this still remains for those oppressed);
  With fearless heart o'er ills be conqueror.
Doubt not that you will someday joy in years more blest,
  And look upon your fatherland once more.' " 128 (126)

## THE FIFTH ELEGY, WRITTEN IN HIS TWENTIETH YEAR

### ON THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING

Now Time, rolled back in endless cycle on itself,
  Calls zephyrs new when warming Spring is seen,
And Earth again assumes brief youth, restored to health;
  Now freed from frost the ground grows freshly green. 4

Am I deceived? Is strength returning to my song?
  Is inspiration, gift of Spring, at hand?
Yes, Spring is here, whereby my art again grows strong,
  (Who would think this?) and doth a task demand. 8

Parnassus' spring and twofold peak my eyes disclose;
  Pyrene's fount is brought at night by sleep.
My breast, incited by a hidden motion, glows,
  While stirred by sacred sound and passion deep. 12

Apollo comes. Apollo comes himself. I see
  Peneian laurels in his locks entwined.
Caught up, I pass through roving clouds, from body free;
  In heights of brightest sky resides my mind. 16

Through shadows borne, through inner caverns of the bards,
  The inmost shrines of gods are shown to me.
The deeds of all Olympus wide my mind regards,
  Nor from my eyes dark Tartarus doth flee. 20

What sings my soul through parted lips, what sound sublime?
  What bears this rage inspired, this sacred thing?
I'll sing for Spring, who gave my talent power to climb;
  Gifts thus returned to her will profit bring. 24

Now, Philomela, nightingale, mid leafage new,
  While all the grove is still, entune your strain;
Let each begin, in city I, in woodland you,
  Together singing, "Spring is here again." 28

Sing Out! The turn for Spring has come. Let praises swell;
  May Muses take this task throughout the years.
Now fleeing fields where Ethiops Tithonic dwell,
  The sun turns golden reins to northern spheres. 32

The path is short, delay is brief for darkling Night,
  Who, harsh and wild, is banished with her shades.
The Lesser Bear, now tired, no longer keeps in sight
  The Great Bear's lengthy trek through Heaven's glades. 36

Throughout the realms above the scattered stars are fired,
  The wonted watch around the halls of Jove;
Since Slaughter, Violence, and Guile with Night retired,
  The Gods fear not the crimes the Giants move. 40

Some shepherd resting on a rocky ridge, perchance,
  As sunlight tints the dewy ground below,
Says, "Phoebus, free from check on speedy steeds advance,
  You were without a girl this night, I know." 44

Diana, viewing Venus' planet in the sky,
  Regains her woods, with quiver rearrayed;
Rejoicing she is seen, her slender rays set by,
  With toil so brief, her brother lending aid. 48

"Aurora, leave your lanquid chamber," Phoebus chides,
  "Upon an old man's bed why love to lie?
On verdant grass Aeolus' huntsman-son abides.
  Arise! Your flames are on Hymettus high." 52

The goddess fair with blushing face admits her crime
  And drives the steeds of dawn to swifter pace.
Now Earth strips off unwelcome age and, in her prime,
  O Phoebus, yearns to yield to your embrace, 56

And she of shapely form, deserving her desires,
  Voluptuous, doth fruitful breasts disclose;
From lovely lips, the Arab harvest she transpires,
  And balsam mild pours forth with Paphos' rose. 60

Behold, a sacred grove enwreathes her lofty brow,
  As Ida's Ops is girt with pined tower,
And she, empowered, it seems, to please with blossoms now,
  Entwines her dewy locks with varied flower; 64

With flowing tresses bound by blooms, Persephone
  When thus arrayed the Spartan god did please,
So Phoebus, look! a willing love exhorteth thee;
  Entreaties sweet are borne on vernal breeze. 68

With wings of cinnamon soft-scented zephyrs move;
  Allurements too the birds are seen to bear;
Not unendowed doth Earth in rashness seek your love,
  Nor needy, ask your longed-for couch to share. 72

Propitious, she provides the healthful herbs to heal,
  And hence she helps exalt your honored name;
If, therefore, worth and gleaming gifts to you appeal,
  (With presents love is often bought, they claim) 76

To thee she shows the wealth she doth in hiding keep
  'Neath mountains raised aloft and waters wide,
How oft she cries, when, wearied on Olympus steep,
  Beneath the western waves you headlong glide, 80

"Why bids the sky-blue mother welcome there to thee,
  O Phoebus, worn with day-long route of thine?
And what to thee is Tethys? What, Atlantic sea?
  Why wash your sacred face in sordid brine? 84

"A choicer coolness will my shadows yield to you;
  On soothing herbs will come a softer rest.
O Phoebus, come, and wet your fiery locks with dew.
  O come, and place your rays upon my breast. 88

"To stroke our bodies stretched on roses moist with dew
  Where you recline will whisper breezes light.
The Semeleian fate affrights me not, 'tis true,
  Nor smoking chariot with steed so bright; 92

"Since you more wisely, Phoebus dear, will use your fire,
  O come and place your rays upon my breast."
Thus wanton Mother Earth breathes forth her deep desire;
  To follow her example rush the rest. 96

Now, truly, roving Cupid runs throughout the lands;
  With bowstrings new his deadly bow doth whine;
From Phoebus' flame, the sun, he kindles failing brands;
  With tips untried his swift shafts harshly shine; 100

E'en Vesta, by the holy hearth, he now assails;
  Diana too, renowned for chastity.
To shape her aging form each year, the claim prevails
  That Venus rises from the tepid sea. 104

The youths call, "Hymen!" through the cities marble-laid.
  "Hail, Hymen!" echoe caverned rocks and shore.
Well-formed, well dressed he comes, in garments fit arrayed
  Whence Punic saffron scent, diffused, doth pour. 108

A maiden throng in gold-girt virgin garments fair
  To take the joys of pleasant spring aspires;
A prayer has each (yet all have but a single prayer)
  That Venus grant the man whom she desires. 112

The shepherd tunes his pipe of seven reeds again,
  And Phyllis harmonizes with her song.
The sailor, while he soothes his stars with nightly strain,
  Light dolphins to the surface calls along. 116

Jove sports upon Olympus lofty with his wife;
  He calls attendant gods to festal board
Now, too, in evening twilight, Satyrs raised to life,
  Swift dancing, flit on flowered rural sward. 120

Again Sylvanus' locks with cypress leaves are bound;
  The goat exists half-god, the god, half-goat.
The Dryads, who before 'neath ancient trees were found,
  Now rove the mountain ridge and fields remote. 124

The god of Arcady runs wild through fields and trees;
  Thou, Ops and Ceres, scarce have safe retreat.
And Faunus, eager, seeks some mountain-nymph to seize
  While she finds safety with her fearful feet; 128

She hides, though poorly covered, hoping to be seen;
  She flees, and, fleeing, wishes to be caught.
In place of Heaven, Gods now choose the woodland green;
  A deity now dwells in every grot. 132

By thy divinity, each grove, be long possessed;
  Leave not your leafy home, ye gods, I pray.
May golden ages grant thee, Jove, to lands distressed;
  Why place your lightning back in clouds? O, stay! 136

Ah, Phoebus, strive, at least, to check your swift team's flight,
  And may the time of spring go slowly by.
Let Winter harsh delay to bring extended night,
  And late let shadows settle on our sky. 140

## THE SIXTH ELEGY

### TO CHARLES DIODATI, VISITING IN THE COUNTRY

When he had written on the thirteenth of December, asking that his verses be excused if they were not as good as usual because, in the midst of the elegant entertainments with which he had been received by his friends, he affirmed, he was not able to give sufficient profitable service to the Muses, he had this reply.

Not stuffed, I greet you with my wishes for good health,
  Which you, perchance, with swollen stomach, need.
But why should your Muse try to lure out mine by stealth,
  Not letting it through pleasant shade proceed? 4

Believe me, in my verse the means could scarce be found
  To show my love, if you should thus entreat.
My love is not within restricting measures bound;
  It cannot freely come on limping feet. 8

How well you tell of solemn feast, of festival,
  And gay December greeting Heaven's King,
Of draughts of wine, before the cheerful hearth, from Gaul,
  Of joy that winters in the country bring. 12

But why complain that verse has fled through food and wine,
  For song loves Bacchus; Bacchus too loves song.
Apollo, decked with berries, set the ivy vine
  Above his laurel, free from sense of wrong. 16

Oft called, across Boeotian hills with Bacchus' cry,
  The ninefold throng and Thyonean band.
The songs which Ovid sent from Tomis' fields were dry,
  Sufficient food and wine were not at hand. 20

Of what save roses, wine, Lyaeus decked with vines
  Sang Teos' muse in measures brief expressed?
Rome's lyrist sweetly sang, while soaked with four-year wine,
  Of Glycera and Chloe, golden-tressed. 24

Boetian Bacchus animated Pindar's strain;
  The pages reek with wine in good supply,
While chariots with broken axles crash amain
  And horsemen, dark with dust of Elis, fly. 28

Fine tables, richly spread, where you are wont to sit
  Feed inspiration and your strength of mind;
Your Massic wine cups foam with floods of fluent wit;
  You pour out meters in the jars confined. 32

Add art and Phoebus who throughout your bosom flows;
  Apollo, Bacchus, Ceres love but you;
It is not strange that three great gods, combined, compose
  Such lovely songs. Look whom they're working through. 36

For you the Thracian lyres, engraved with gold, resound
  When softly struck by skilful fingers fleet;
The lyre thus heard, mid tapestries that hang around,
  Directs with trembling art the maidens' feet. 40

Let sights like these, at least, detain your Muses still;
  What drunkenness dispels may they recall.
Believe me, while the flutists play and, to the quill,
  The festal dancers fill the scented hall. 44

You'll find that Phoebus creeps in silence through your breast,
  As heat that quickly permeates your frame;
Through maiden' eyes and fingers making music blest
  Slips Thalia who to your heart lays claim. 48

Light-footed Elegy, calls any she may please;
  She is the care of many gods above,
Erato, Liber, Ceres, all aid elegies,
  And rosy Venus, too, with tender Love. 52

For poets such as this rich banqueting is right;
  They often drench themselves with aged wine;
But he who tells of wars, great heroes, men of might,
  And Heaven ruled by full grown Jove divine, 56

And sings of sacred councils of the gods on high
  And realms beneath with savage howling hound,
As Samos' teacher, let him luxury deny,
  His sustenance in harmless herbage found. 60

May he from beechen cups the clearest water taste
  And sober draughts from fountains pure obtain;
To this be added youth, both free from crime and chaste,
  Firm character, and hands without a stain. 64

With lustral water washed, in sacred robes so bright,
  You meet, O prophet, gods so tyrannous;
They say that sage Tiresias, when robbed of sight,
  And Linus, the Ogygian, lived thus, 68

And aged Orpheus, with beasts he had subdued,
  In lonely caves, and Calchas fleeing fate;
Thus Homer, drinking water, eating simple food,
  Conveyed Ulysses through the lengthy strait, 72

Past Persa's Phoeban child and halls with monstrous brood,
  Past shallows treacherous through sirens' song
And midst your dwellings, Hades' king, where, with black blood,
  'Tis said that he detained the ghostly throng. 76

The bard is sacred to the gods, their priest below;
  Of Jove his lips and secret breast transpire.
But if you think it worth your while to know
  Of my affairs, and this is your desire, 80

I hymn the King of Peace, of seed sent from on high,
  And sacred ages vowed in Holy Writ,
The lodging in the manger poor, the infant cry
  Of Christ (enthroned with God he now doth sit), 84

The starry sky with voices tuned in harmony,
  And false gods crushed at once before their shrine.
I give it to the day of Christ's nativity;
  It came to me as dawn began to shine. 88

Some thoughts entuned to native shepherds' pipes remain
  For you to judge while I recite the strain. 90

THE SEVENTH ELEGY, WRITTEN IN HIS NINTEENTH YEAR

Not yet, seductive Venus, did I know your laws;
  My carefree breast from Paphos' fire was free.
I scorned as childish darts the arrows Cupid draws
  And spurned, O mighty Love, your deity. 4

"Young lad, shoot peaceful doves," I said, in my disdain,
  "Unmanly wars befit a leader mild,
Or, little boy, lead triumphs proud for sparrows slain;
  Such trophies suit the warfare of a child. 8

"Why aim your aimless arms against the race of man?
  Your quiver makes no mighty men amazed."
No gods more swiftly angers than the Cyprian;
  Now wroth, with doubled fire he fiercely blazed. 12

'Twas spring, and sunlight shining on the roof-tops' height
  Had brought, O month of May, your first of days;
But as for me, my eyes still sought retreating night,
  Not yet accustomed to the morning rays. 16

Beside my couch stood restless Love, with tinted wing;
  A movement of his quiver had betrayed
The god, with face and eyes so sweetly menacing,
  With all befitting youth or Love arrayed; 20

Like Ganymede, upon Olympus' timeless plot,
  Who mixes brimming cups, beloved of Jove;
Or Hylas, Thiodamas' son, by Naiads caught,
  Who for the shapely maidens' kisses strove; 24

He added wrath, as you would think, becomingly;
  He added savage threats with bitterness.
"More safely had you learned from others, wretch," said he.
  "The power of my right hand you shall assess. 28

"You shall be numbered with the men who've tried my might;
  I'll bring belief in truth through misery.
I pulled down Python-slaying Phoebus from his height;
  If you know not, he yielded, meek, to me; 32

"As oft as he remembers Daphne, he agrees
  My missiles make more swift and harsh attack.
The Parthian knight bends not the bow with greater ease,
  Who conquers, feigning flight while shooting back. 36

"Cydonia's hunter yields, and he who, unbeknown,
  Was author of his wife's distressing fate,
While Hercules, with all his band, is forced to own
  My right to rule, as is Orion great. 40

"Let Jupiter himself hurl lightning bolts at me;
  My shafts will cling within his side impaled.
What else you doubt my darts will teach more fittingly,
  As will your heart, not aimlessly assailed. 44

"You fool, no succor will the snake of Phoebus bring;
  Your Muses cannot raise defence for you."
He spoke, his golden-pointed arrow brandishing,
  Then off to Venus' warm embraces flew. 48

Though fierce, with threat'ning lips, he thundered forth at me,
  Yet I, amused, was not at all afraid;
The fields not far from town still beckoned pleasantly,
  And streets where urban dwellers promenade. 52

A lovely, crowding throng, like goddesses, advanced,
  Proceeding to and fro along the ways;
The day shone brightly forth, by double light enhanced;
  Is this, indeed, where Phoebus found his rays? 56

From pleasant sights like these I did not sternly flee,
  Impelled ahead by youthful passion's blaze;
I sent my glances, meeting theirs incautiously,
  Unable to restrain my roving gaze. 60

By chance, I noticed one surpassing all the rest;
  That light was the beginning of my woe;
Thus Venus should desire to seem, with beauty blest--
  Thus Juno looked--to mortals here below. 64

Malicious Cupid, mindful, placed her there for me,
  And he alone had plotted my dismay;
Heaped brands and arrows on his back hung heavily,
  While he, sly rogue, nearby, in hiding lay. 68

At once, now to her brows, now to her face he clung,
  Hence to her lips and cheeks he made descent;
Against my helpless breast a thousand blows were flung,
  From whereso'er the agile archer went. 72

Strange frenzy followed in my heart without delay;
  In love, I blazed inside, and all was burned;
Meanwhile, the only one who pleased, to my dismay,
  Was taken from my eyes and ne'er returned. 76

But senseless, silently lamenting, I progressed,
  In doubt, oft wishing to retrace my way,
In part still here, part seeking my desire, distressed,
  While pleased to weep my joy of fleeting stay. 80

Thus Juno's son amid the Lemnian forges lay;
  Hurled thence, with Heaven lost, he headlong fell;
Thus Amphiaraus sought the sunlight snatched away,
  When borne by panic-stricken steeds to Hell. 84

To set aside or seek my new-found love was vain;
  What could I do, in sorrow and distress:
O, might I see that countenance beloved again,
  Her, face to face, with doleful words address. 88

Not formed from unrelenting adamantive stone,
  Perchance, she might consent to hear my prayer:
I shall be made example, foremost and alone;
  Believe me, none has burned with such despair. 92

Do thou, the winged god of tender love, I pray,
  Desist; let not your deeds oppose your part;
Your bow, o goddess' son, now causes me dismay;
  Your fire is no less powerful than your dart. 96

Be thou the highest god, the only god for me;
  Your altars shall give smoke from gifts I add;
My frenzy take; yet take it not, assuredly;
  I know not why, each lover is so sweetly sad. 100

Hereafter grant, if any girl shall steal my heart,
  To pierce us both with but a single dart. 102

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These lines I wrote, vain trophy of my idleness,
  Misled of mind and lacking industry;
My wayward guide was foolish youth, I must confess,
  And evil error drove me forcibly. 106 (104)

Then Academic shades showed me Socratic streams;
  To cast away my yoke was their advice,
And thereupon the flame became extinct; it seems
  My breast was firmly bound with depths of ice. 110 (108)

This chill caused Cupid, with his shafts, to take to flight,
  And Venus fears my Diomedan might. 112 (110)

## ON THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

When daring evil deeds, O Fawkes perfidious,
  Against the king and lords of Britain free,
Did you desire, in part, to seem magnanimous,
  Offsetting crime with evil piety,

You planned to send them up to Heaven's gates on high
  In sulphrous chariot with wheels afire;
As he whom whirlwinds once caught up into the sky
  From Jordan's fields, unharmed by Fates so dire.

## ON THE SAME

Did you attempt to give King James to Heaven thus,
  You monster of the seven hills of Rome?
Unless your deity gives better gifts to us,
  Deceitful wretch, please keep your gifts at home.

But late, to join the fellowship of stars he sped,
  Without the hellish powder or your aid.
Now drive the loathsome cowls into the sky, instead,
  And senseless gods in Godless Rome arrayed.

Unless assistance such as this you will supply,
  They scarcely will ascend into the sky.

## ON THE SAME

The fires of Purgatory James in no wise feared,
  Without which none might rise to homes of bliss;
The thrice-crowned Latin monster gnashed its teeth and reared
  Ten horns while threatening with fearful hiss:

"You shall not scorn my rites without your share of Hell,
  O Britain, soon to rue religion spurned;
You shall not ever reach the starry citadel
  Unless along your grievous way you've burned."

Your prophecy was close to deadly truth, indeed,
  And weight was scarcely wanting words so dire;
He nearly wheeled his way to airy heights with speed--
  A soul well done by Tartarean fire.

## ON THE SAME

Just now had godless Rome condemned with curses dread
  This man to Styx, declaring he should die;
Now changed, she tries to lift him to the stars instead
  And seeks to raise him to the gods on high.

## ON THE INVENTION OF GUNPOWDER

Japetus' son was praised by blinded men of old
  For bringing airy brands from Phœbus car;
But he who took the lurid arms, as we are told,
  And trident bolt of Jove is greater far.

## TO LEONORA, SINGING IN ROME

A winged angel sent from Heaven's ranks essays
  To care for each. Believe it every land!
Why marvel, Leonora, at your greater praise?
  Your very voice pronounces God at hand;

Or, certainly, the Third Part of the Trinity,
  With Heaven left, comes stealing through your throat;
Steals forth, unseen, accustoming so easily
  Our mortal hearts to the immortal note.

If God is everywhere, in everything revealed,
  Through you He speaks; all other lips are sealed.

## TO THE SAME

Another Leonora won Torquato's heart;
  Insane with love the frenzied bard withdrew.
Poor wretch! how much more blest had been destruction's dart
  In your times, Leonora, sent by you!

If he had seen you play the lyre with strings of gold,
  Entuning it to your Pierian voice,
Though wilder than Dircaean Pentheus he rolled
  His eyes, or lay inert, deprived of choice,

With sounds so sweet you could have calmed his mind distressed
  From giddy paths it blindly groped along;
By breathing healing peace within his troubled breast,
  Restored him to himself with soothing song.

## TO THE SAME

Why glory in Parthenope's reputed shrine,
  Naivest Naples, or your sirens bland?
Why boast that you betrayed a sea-shore nymph divine
  And placed her on a pyre on Cumae's strand?

She lives! but now has left the hoarse Posilipo
  For Tiber's pleasant waves which sing along;
Adorned with love which sons of Romulus bestow,
  She holds both men and gods with sweetest song.

## THE FABLE OF THE FARMER AND HIS LANDLORD

Each year a farmer picked choice apples from the tree
  And gave them to his landlord in the town,
Who, coveting the tree with fruit so savoury,
  Transplanted it to gardens of his own.

The tree was weak with many years (though fruitful yet)
  And straightway died when taken from the farm.
The landlord, mocked by empty hope, now felt regret
  And cursed his hands so swift to work their harm.

"Ah, how much better had it been to take," cried he,
  "The farmer's gifts, though small, with gratefulness!"
"I might have held in check my greed and gluttony;
  Now neither tree nor fruit do I possess.

The End of the Elegies

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